

Rock Island
Trail

STATE PARK

TM

MASTER
PLAN



MoDNR Director Dru Buntin (seated at the table on the left), Missouri Gov. Mike Parson (seated at the table in the center), and Ameren Missouri Chairman and President Mark Birk (seated at the table on the right) with the signed agreement transferring 144 miles of the Rock Island Corridor to the state of Missouri on Dec. 14, 2021.

ROCK ISLAND TRAIL STATE PARK MASTER PLAN



This plan has been prepared by Missouri State Parks to document the rail-to-trail development process of Rock Island Trail State Park.



Printing of the Rock Island Trail State Park master plan was paid for by the Missouri Parks Association. Scan or click the QR code to visit their website.



Cover photo: Osage River Bridge



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Rock Island Trail State Park is to provide nonmotorized, accessible trail-related recreational opportunities; preserve and/or restore the natural and cultural resources located within the park’s boundaries; provide interpretative opportunities to enable the appreciation of the park’s resources; drive positive economic impacts for rural communities along the trail; and be a good neighbor through collaboration with landowners and their needs.



Top: Developed section of Rock Island Trail State Park near Leeton; Above: Scenic view west of Belle

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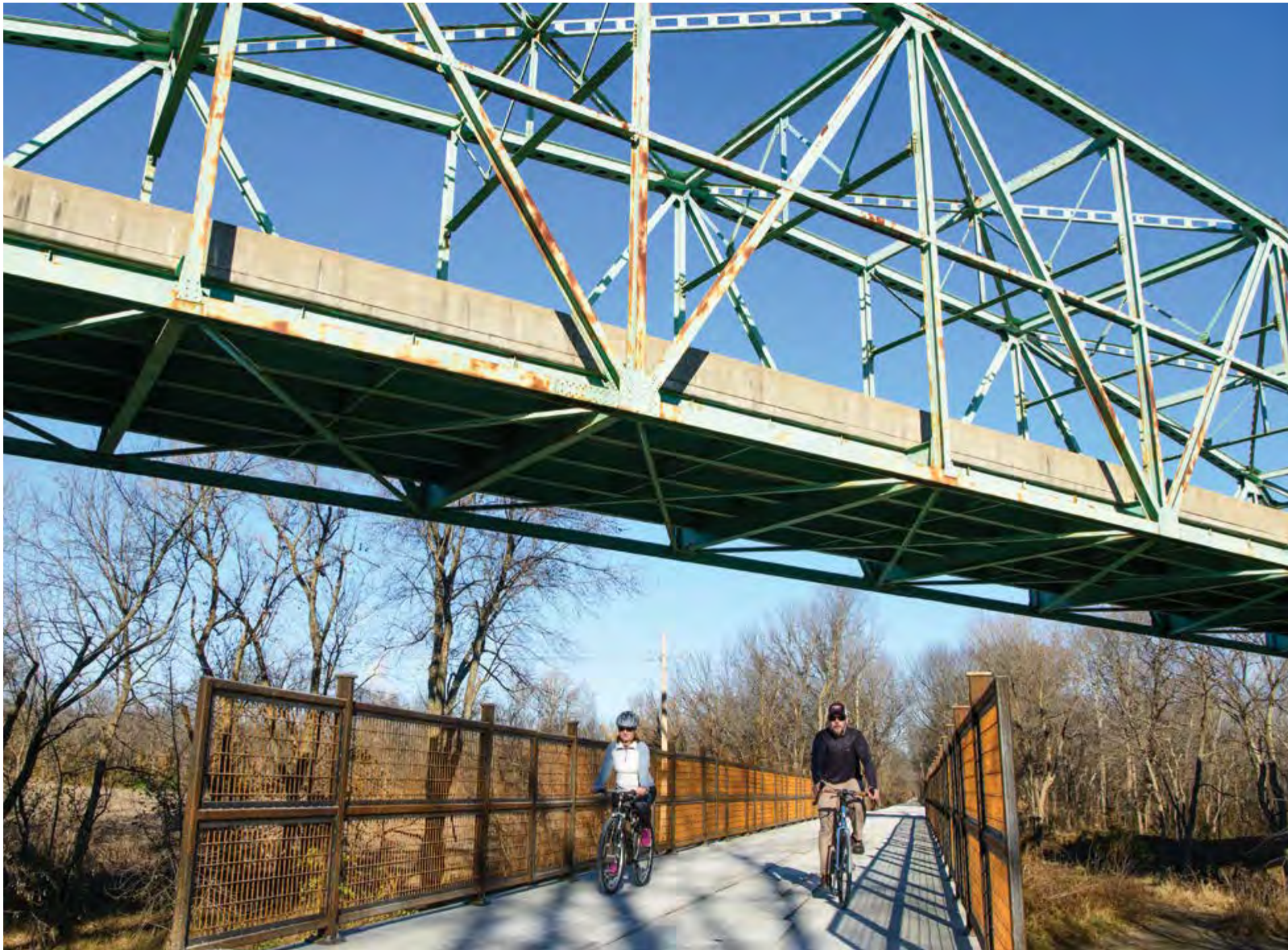
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Rock Island Trail State Park at Pleasant Hill.



MASTER PLAN

This master plan serves as the development framework for the undeveloped section of Rock Island Trail State Park and is a summation of community discussions, development concepts, strategic partnerships and the data collected throughout the planning process. Moving forward, this living document will be updated as the development framework evolves. On the following pages, communities along the undeveloped sections of Rock Island Trail State Park are highlighted, depicting conceptual trailhead locations and amenities essential for trail development. Trail development will depend heavily on funding availability, strategic partnerships and community contributions. Much like communities along the Katy Trail State Park, Rock Island Trail State Park communities have the opportunity to connect to this premier rail-to-trail conversion in an integral way, bringing positive economic impact and recreational opportunity to the region. Trailhead locations on the Rock Island will be determined by community interest, distance between communities and potential services that can be offered to trail users. Missouri State Parks also encourages communities interested in assisting with trail development and/or providing recreational amenities to take advantage of outdoor recreation grants and technical assistance services offered by the National Park Service, state agencies, regional planning commissions and nonprofit organizations.

ROCK ISLAND TRAIL STATE PARK – HOW CAN I HELP?

HELP DEVELOP ROCK ISLAND TRAIL STATE PARK

Missouri's state park system contains 93 state parks and historic sites and is one of the top four state park systems in the nation. Missouri State Parks is committed to developing Rock Island Trail State Park without the use of existing State Parks funding.



Since 2001, the Missouri State Parks Foundation has been helping Missouri State Parks create top-notch experiences for residents and visitors alike. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, it has supported fundraising for Don Robinson State Park, Battle of Island Mound State Historic Site, enhancements to Katy Trail State Park and small but important projects all around the state.

The foundation partners with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and Missouri State Parks to provide Missouri's state parks and historic sites what they need to serve the people of Missouri. Currently, the organization is focused on raising funds to support the undeveloped sections of 205-mile Rock Island Trail State Park. The foundation has raised more than \$1 million to allow the state to accept ownership of the corridor, and continues to fundraise.

Anyone interested may support this project by making a donation today.



Scan or click the QR code to visit the Missouri State Parks Foundation donations webpage.



Left: At-grade crossing at Union; Center: Osage River Bridge; Right: Tunnel at Eugene

MISSOURI'S RAIL-TO-TRAIL TIMELINE

1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995

This timeline reflects the past 50 years of history of rail-to-trail development in Missouri. According to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the 240-mile Katy Trail State Park is the longest developed rail-trail in America. Katy Trail State Park has also been nominated for various awards that recognize its outstanding recreational opportunities and role in making communities quality places in which to live. The addition of Rock Island Trail State Park makes Missouri the leader in this important category of outdoor recreation.

1968

The U.S. Congress passed the National Trails System Act, which called for the establishment of trails in both urban and rural settings for the enjoyment of people of all ages, interests, skills and physical abilities.



1983

RAILBANKING

The U.S. Congress amended the National Trails System Act, authorizing the Interstate Commerce Commission to preserve or “bank” railroad corridors no longer needed for service for future transportation needs and used in the interim for trail use.

1986

Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad filed to discontinue rail operations from Sedalia to Machens.



1987

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources was issued a certificate of interim trail use to begin using the MKT corridor as a recreational trail.

1987

EDWARD “TED” and PAT JONES

Philanthropist businessman Edward “Ted” Jones and his wife Pat, both supporters of the rails-to-trails concept, donated \$200,000 to the Conservation Federation of Missouri Charitable Trust to be used to acquire the MKT Railroad right-of-way. The Joneses subsequently donated an additional \$2 million for construction of the Katy Trail from Machens to Sedalia.

1990

Feb. 21, 1990

The U.S. Supreme Court unanimously upheld the constitutionality of the National Trails System Act stating, “Congress apparently believed that every line is a potentially valuable asset that merits preservation even if no future rail use for it is currently foreseeable.”



April 1990

First section of Katy Trail State Park opened between Rocheport and McBaine.

August 1990

A section of the Katy Trail was opened from Augusta to just northeast of Defiance.

1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022

1996

Katy Trail State Park corridor from St. Charles to just past Sedalia was developed.

1999

September 1999

Through a donation from the Union Pacific Railroad, the department extended the Katy Trail to Clinton, opening the section between Sedalia and Clinton.

2007

Katy Trail State Park was inducted into the national Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s Hall of Fame.



2011

The final 12-mile section between St. Charles and Machens opened, completing the 240-mile Katy Trail State Park.

2012

A Katy Trail State Park economic impact study found that the average visitor spends \$56.82 on Katy Trail-related expenses, generating almost \$18.5 million annually, supporting 367 jobs and \$8.2 million in payroll.

Oct. 25, 2012

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources signed an Interim Trail Use Agreement with Missouri Central Railroad (MCRR) to acquire the corridor that became the developed section of Rock Island Trail State Park.

Nov. 2012

The initial five miles of the MCRR corridor from Pleasant Hill to Wingate was transferred to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

2015

A second Interim Trail Use Agreement with MCRR was signed for the 42 miles of corridor from Wingate to Windsor. Shortly after this agreement, the additional right-of-way was transferred to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

2016

Dec. 19, 2016

The Rock Island Spur of Katy Trail State Park from Windsor to Pleasant Hill opened to the public. This makes it possible for Missourians to traverse from one side of the state to the other along the linear rail-trail.



2021

Missouri State Parks attendance is gathered yearly. Nearly 440,000 visitors used Katy Trail State Park in 2021.

Dec. 14, 2021

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources accepted ownership of 144 miles of corridor extending from Windsor to Beaufort. MCRR, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ameren Missouri, donated the property to the state at no cost. At closing, MCRR also assigned the Missouri Department of Natural Resources its rights to build “rail with trail” along a 12.6-mile section of active rail line that extends from Beaufort to Union. Since that time, the current owner of this portion of the line has begun the process of abandoning 9.71 of those miles.

2022

Nov. 18, 2022

The Federal Surface Transportation Board issued a Notice of Interim Trail Use, granting parties a one-year period to negotiate an Interim Trail Use Agreement for the corridor between Beaufort and Union.

ROCK ISLAND TRAIL STATE PARK – A BRIEF HISTORY

BRIDGES AND RIVERS

The Chicago and Rock Island Railroad, previously known as the Rock Island and LaSalle Railroad Co., was incorporated in Illinois on Feb. 7, 1851. The initial railway extending from Chicago to Rock Island, was completed in 1854. This was the first railway connecting Chicago to the Mississippi River. The railway’s expansion, including the construction of the first railroad bridge across the Mississippi, would impact American history.

At this point in history, westward expansion created tension between river and railway transportation interests. The construction of a bridge across this major river was controversial. Numerous lawsuits were filed attempting to halt construction of the bridge connecting Rock Island to Davenport, Iowa. Even Jefferson Davis, secretary of war, filed an injunction to halt construction on behalf of the U.S. government against the Railroad Bridge Co., the company building the bridge. In May 1856, 15 days after the bridge opened, the steamboat Effie Afton collided into the bridge. This event led to lawsuits between steamboat and railroad interests.

A young railroad attorney, Abraham Lincoln, defended the railroad’s interests. The case was eventually

dismissed because the jury could not reach a decision, but this trial brought much recognition to Lincoln, who would run for president three years later.

The battle over bridges on the Mississippi River by the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad continued until 1867, with multiple cases appearing before the U.S. Supreme Court.

THE ROCK ISLAND RAILROAD COMES TO MISSOURI

Known as the St. Louis Line, the St. Louis to Kansas City route of the Rock Island Railroad originated in 1870 with the incorporation of the St. Louis and Fort Scott Railroad. Around 1887, the railway came under the control of the Santa Fe Railroad system as the St. Louis, Kansas City and Colorado Railroad. By 1901, the railway



Train cars and railroad employees of the St. Louis, Kansas City and Colorado Railroad, prior to the acquisition of the line by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad.



Rock Island Train Engine

extended from St. Louis to Bland, Mo. With existing railway developed in Kansas City, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad seized the opportunity to connect to St. Louis through the 1902 acquisition of the St. Louis, Kansas City and Colorado Railroad.

By 1904, the Rock Island reached Kansas City, contributing significantly to the growth and development along Missouri’s Ozark Border



Rock Island Railroad bridge construction

region. The railway was pivotal in the transportation of agricultural freight, including livestock, grain, milk and other goods, across the state.

END OF AN ERA

Over the century, the railroad reorganized several times as the railway expanded throughout the Midwest and West. The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad entered into its third and final bankruptcy on March 17, 1975 – this one the largest bankruptcy liquidation in



Leeton at the end of the passenger train era

U.S. history at that the time. On March 31, 1980, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad operated its last train on the line. Soon after, the line was purchased by the St. Louis Southwestern Railway, known as the Cotton Belt. In 1996, the line was acquired by the Union Pacific Railroad, which later sold some of the rail rights to the Missouri Central Railroad.



Near Cole Camp

THE LANDSCAPE

Rock Island Trail State Park passes through lands once home to Americans Indians, including the Osage Nation. From east to west, the corridor traverses two distinct natural divisions of Missouri: the Ozark Border and the Osage Plains. From Beaufort to Belle, the landscape consists of relatively level topography, which once supported upland prairies interspersed with post oak savannas. From Belle to Eldon, the corridor crosses the rugged, hilly breaks of the Gasconade, Maries and Osage rivers drainages. Today, few relict natural communities still exist within this section of the corridor. Those that remain include white and post oak savanna, dolomite glade, dry and mesic forest in valleys and bottomlands, and several dolomite cliffs along the larger river drainages. From Eldon to Windsor, the corridor extends across the level-to-undulating Osage Plains, once home to tallgrass prairies dissected by savannas and deciduous woodlands.

THE ROCK ISLAND BECOMES A RAIL TRAIL

On Oct. 25, 2012, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources signed an Interim Trail Use Agreement with Missouri Central Railroad (MCRR). The following month, the initial 5 miles from Pleasant Hill to Wingate was transferred to MoDNR. In early 2015, a second Interim Trail Use Agreement was signed for the 42 miles of corridor from Wingate to Windsor. Shortly after, additional right of way was



Above photos: Before work began on the developed section of Rock Island Trail State Park.

transferred to MoDNR. On Dec. 10, 2016, the Rock Island Spur of Katy Trail State Park extending from Windsor to Pleasant Hill officially opened to the public. The 47.5-mile rail-trail (now the developed portion of Rock Island Trail State Park) was designed for walkers and bicyclists with the trail between Windsor and Purvis Road outside of Pleasant Hill open to equestrian users.

In 2019, legislation was enacted to establish a dedicated “Rock Island Trail State Park Endowment Fund” to ensure all funds received or otherwise allocated to Rock Island Trail State Park are used in support of this purpose and not spent for any other reasons (Section 253.177, RSMo). In 2020, the Missouri State Parks Foundation, in partnership with several other organizations, began fundraising private funds to support Rock Island Trail State Park and raised more than one million dollars in support.

Then on Dec. 14, 2021, MoDNR accepted ownership of 144 miles of corridor extending from Windsor to Beaufort. Missouri Central Railroad a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ameren Missouri, donated the property to the state at no cost. At closing, MCRR also assigned MoDNR its rights to build “rail with trail” along a 12.6-mile section of active rail line that extends from Beaufort to Union. Since that time,

the current owner of this portion of the line has begun the process of abandoning 9.71 of those miles. In response to a request from MoDNR with concurrence from the railroad, the Federal Surface Transportation Board issued a Notice of Interim Trail Use on Nov. 18, 2022, granting the parties a one-year period to negotiate an interim trail use agreement.



Above photos: Users on the developed section of Rock Island Trail State Park.

MISSOURI'S RAIL TRAILS

The developed section of Rock Island Trail State Park that is open to the public runs 47.5 miles from Pleasant Hill to Windsor. There are five trailheads, including the trailhead at Windsor that the park shares with Katy Trail State Park.

This developed section of the Rock Island Trail, opened in 2016, was originally considered the Rock Island Spur of Katy Trail State Park. With the acquisition of the Rock Island Railroad corridor, the developed spur became part of Rock Island Trail State Park.

Rock Island Trail State Park is part of a larger rail-to-trail system within Missouri State Parks. At Windsor, Rock Island Trail State Park connects to Katy Trail State Park, the nation's



The developed section of Rock Island Trail State Park

longest developed rail-trail stretching 240 miles between Clinton and Machens in St. Charles County. The park is built on the former corridor of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad (MKT or Katy) and features 26 trailheads and four fully restored depots along the way. The trail is open to walkers, hikers and bicyclists with sections also open for equestrian use. Katy Trail State Park annually attracts more than 400,000 visitors.



Rock Island Trail State Park will connect to Jackson County's Rock

Island Trail, and will become part of a trail network spanning the entire state of Missouri, linking Kansas City to St. Louis.



Katy Trail State Park near Rocheport



PUBLIC USE OF UNDEVELOPED CORRIDOR IS PROHIBITED

While the 47.5 miles from Pleasant Hill to Windsor are open to the public, **use of the undeveloped corridor between Windsor and Union is strictly prohibited.**

ROCK ISLAND TRAIL AND KATY TRAIL STATE PARKS



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|---|----------------------|-----------------|
| — Jackson County Rock Island Trail | ■ City location along Rock Island Trail | ⦿ State route | — Water |
| — Greenwood Gap | ■ City location along Katy Trail | — Road | ■ City boundary |
| — Rock Island Trail State Park (developed) | ■ Trailhead | Milepost | ⌂ Bridge |
| — Rock Island Trail State Park (undeveloped) | ■ Equestrian trailhead | Ⓕ Parking | ⌂ Tunnel |
| — Rock Island Trail State Park (undeveloped rail with trail) | ⦿ Interstate highway | Ⓖ Equestrian Parking | |
| — Katy Trail State Park | ⦿ U.S. highway | | |



Scan or click the QR code to visit the interactive map.

ROCK ISLAND TRAIL STATE PARK – DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The inclusion of Rock Island Trail State Park into Missouri’s state parks system is a landmark achievement, further adding to Missouri’s world class rails-to-trails system. The trail is an invaluable asset to the citizens of Missouri, as an estimated 41% of the state’s residents live within 50 miles of the trail’s corridor. The trail provides numerous benefits including:

- Positive economic impact for communities and landowners along the trail.
- Recreational opportunities for all Missourians and tourists alike.
- Opportunities to interpret the natural and cultural resources along the historic corridor.
- Preservation (banking) of an important transportation corridor.
- Opportunities for future recreational and economic partnerships.

Moving forward, Missouri State Parks is committed to developing Rock Island Trail State Park without the use of existing State Parks funding. Development of a rails-to-trails project of this magnitude is long-lived and multi-faceted. Fortunately, Missouri State Parks development and operational experience with the nationally-recognized Katy Trail State Park provides a successful framework to replicate. The points below outline Missouri State Parks development strategy for Rock Island Trail State Park.

- Collaborate with landowners on their needs, such as fencing, livestock and equipment crossings, and drainage issues.
- Cultivate strategic partnerships with communities along the corridor.
- Connect with communities through outdoor recreation grant opportunities and technical assistance services offered by the National Park Service, state agencies, regional planning commissions and nonprofit organizations.
- Secure development costs through private donations and fundraising, grant opportunities and community contributions.
- Ensure compliance with any state and federal environmental and historic preservation laws.
- Conduct cost analysis of development challenges as funding becomes available.
- Provide design specifications to communities for continuity of development.



Top: Argyle tunnel; Above: Haw Creek Bridge; Right: Trail near South Moreau Creek bridge



Info Depot at Pleasant Hill

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Starting in January 2022, Missouri State Parks held Rock Island Trail State Park public meetings in Versailles, Owensville and Freeburg. The open house-style public meetings enabled public engagement and allowed Missouri State Parks' representatives to answer questions, gather input and assess the needs and goals of each community and the landowners along the corridor. The meetings also provided information on trail development and operations, public safety, landowner and real estate topics, grant opportunities and future partnership opportunities.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT MEETINGS

Following the public meetings, Missouri State Parks held a series of community assessment meetings with elected officials, business owners, land owners and community members. The objective of these assessment meetings was to answer questions, gauge development interests, provide information about proposed funding concepts, assess proposed trailhead locations and collect data on community connectivity and infrastructure.

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT MEETINGS SCHEDULE



Eldon

Jan. 17, 2022, 6 p.m.
Eldon Community Assessment
Eldon Career Center,
112 S. Pine St., Eldon



Versailles

Jan. 18, 2022, 7 p.m.
Versailles Public Meeting
Morgan County Library
600 N. Hunter St., Versailles

Jan. 18, 2022, 7 p.m.
Versailles Community Assessment
Morgan County Library
600 N. Hunter St., Versailles

Jan. 20, 2022, 5:30 p.m.
Owensville Public Meeting
Scenic Regional Library -
Owensville Branch,
503 S. Olive St., Owensville

Jan. 20, 2022, 7:30 p.m.
Owensville Community Assessment
Owensville City Hall Council Chambers
107 W. Sears Ave., Owensville



Owensville

Jan. 25, 2022, 5:30 p.m.
Freeburg Public Meeting
American Legion Post 317
402 Highway 63, Freeburg

March 2, 2022, 6 p.m.
Stover Community Assessment
Stover City Hall
107 W. Second St., Stover

March 3, 2022, 6 p.m.
Belle Community Assessment
Belle City Hall, 200 E. Third St., Belle

March 7, 2022, 6:30 p.m.
Freeburg Community Assessment
Freeburg Town Hall
304 S. Highway 63, Freeburg

March 8, 2022, 6 p.m.
Rosebud Community Assessment
Rosebud City Hall, 307 N. Cedar,
Rosebud

March 15, 2022, 6 p.m.
Cole Camp Community Assessment
The German Table
107 E. Main St., Cole Camp

April 7, 2022, 6 p.m.
Windsor Community Assessment
Windsor City Hall
125 S. Main St., Windsor

April 18, 2022, 9 a.m.
Cole County Community Assessment
Cole County Courthouse
311 E. High St., Jefferson City



Gerald

April 11, 2022, 6 p.m.
Gerald Community Assessment
Gerald Lions Hall
120 N. Bernhardt Ave., Gerald
April 21, 2022, 7 p.m.



Argyle

Argyle/Leslie Community Assessment
Knights of Columbus
513 Second St., Argyle

May 11, 2022, 7 p.m.
Morgan County Mennonites Community Assessment
Show Me Auction Center
17829 Shadey Brook Drive, Versailles



Barnett

May 12, 2022, 6 p.m.
Barnett Community Assessment
Barnett Baptist Church
714 Third St., Barnett
June 2, 2022, 6:30 p.m.



Bland

Bland Community Assessment
Bland City Hall
109 Colorado Ave., Bland

Jun 2, 2022, 9 a.m.
Gasconade County Commission
Owensville City Hall Council Chambers
107 W. Sears Ave., Owensville

Jul 11, 2022, 6 p.m.
Eugene Community Assessment
Eugene Christian Church
10606 Tunnel St., Eugene

Jul 15, 2022, 8:30 a.m.
Morgan County Commission
Morgan County Courthouse
100 E. Newton, Versailles

Jul 20, 2022, 9 a.m.
Miller County Commission
Miller County Courthouse
2001 Highway 52, Tuscumbia

Jul 25, 2022, 1 p.m.
Benton County Commission
Benton County Courthouse
316 Van Buren St., Warsaw



Scan or click the QR code for additional meeting information.



Belle

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Also attending these community meetings were representatives from the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program, which has adopted the Rock Island Trail State Park development as a project of interest. The RTCA is a regional community partnership that provides technical assistance to local governments or community organizations planning outdoor recreation or natural resource conservation projects. Through RTCA, numerous services are available to communities, such as project guidance, strategic planning, park planning, funding strategies, and conceptual plans and renderings.

LANDOWNER ENGAGEMENT

ADJACENT LANDOWNERS

A large portion of the Rock Island Trail State Park traverses rural county areas inhabited by family farms, local industry and unincorporated communities. As the corridor navigates alongside a variety of landowners, Missouri State Parks is committed to being a good neighbor and collaborating with landowners and their needs, such as fencing, cattle crossings and license agreements.

Missouri State Parks is meeting with landowners on a daily basis, answering questions and helping with fencing needs – both building and supplying materials. At the end of 2022, meetings with 35 landowners had been held. More than 5 miles of fence have been built and an additional 22 miles of fencing needs are being addressed.

If you are an adjacent landowner and would like to discuss fencing options, please call or text 573-489-8780 or send an email to moparks@dnr.mo.gov.



Top: Scenic view from the undeveloped area of Rock Island Trail State Park. Above: Meeting with a landowner.



Photos of finished fencing and gate configurations on the undeveloped portion of Rock Island Trail State Park.

FENCING INFORMATION

Missouri State Parks has been working with adjacent landowners along the Rock Island 144-mile corridor who have expressed interest in fencing the boundary between their property and the corridor right-of-way. The following is a description of fencing materials used by Missouri State Parks:

Fencing Materials

All materials will be made in the U.S.A. and locally sourced.

Fencing Specifications

5 rows of 12.5 gauge 4 point barb wire
1.33 lb./ft. T posts 6 ft. in length placed every 10 ft.
2 7/8 in. well pipe for line posts placed every 100 ft.
2 7/8 in. well pipe and 7/8 in. sucker rod for corners, bracing, water gaps, etc.

Gates

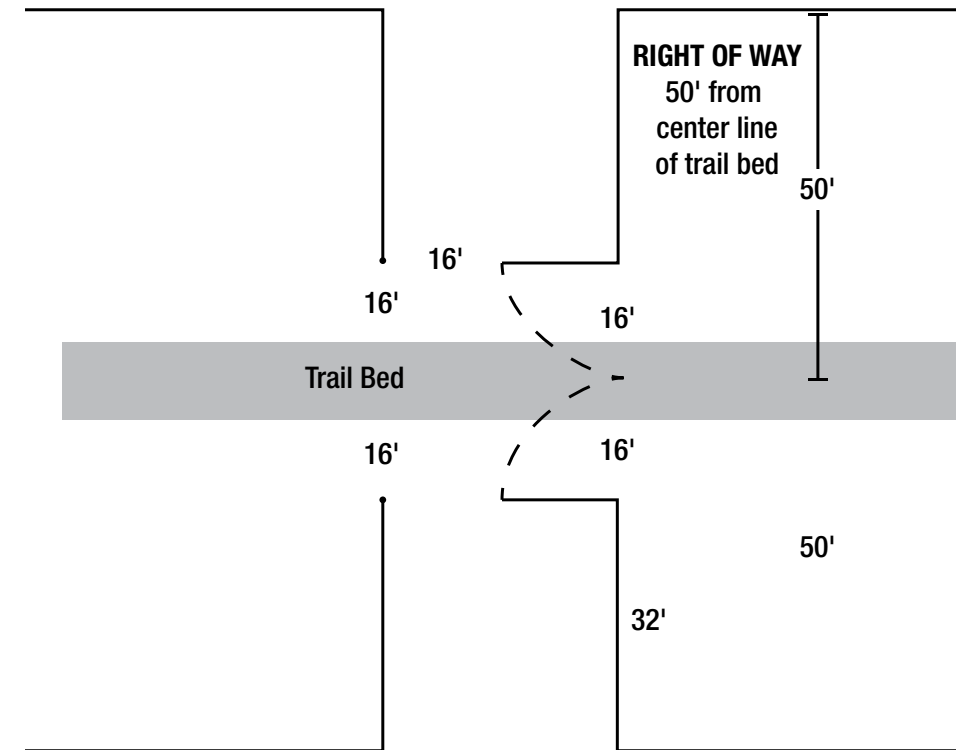
16 ft gates, as needed
Cattle crossings should be built using pipe and sucker rod with two 16 ft. gates on each side. See photos.

Questions?

If you are an adjacent landowner and would like to discuss fencing options, please call or text 573-489-8780 or send an email to moparks@dnr.mo.gov.



Scan or click the QR code for fencing information.



Example of cattle crossing gate configuration.

ADJACENT LANDOWNER INFORMATION: Liability

Missouri State Parks takes the concerns of adjacent landowners seriously, especially with respect to the potential for intrusion onto private property. It is the intent of Missouri State Parks to work cooperatively with adjacent landowners along the corridor, just as it has on Katy Trail State Park.

Missouri statutes Sections 258.100, 537.346 and 537.351, RSMo protect landowners adjacent to recreational trails and parks from civil liability for injuries to trespassers or those entering the adjacent landowner’s property without implied or expressed permission, invitation or consent.

In addition to statutory protections, Missouri State Parks has worked cooperatively with landowners adjacent to Katy Trail State Park to help minimize the likelihood for trespass from the trail onto adjoining property. This is accomplished primarily by marking the boundaries of state park property with signs placed at regular intervals, which also warn trail users not to trespass. This message is also provided via signage and brochures at all trailhead information depots. Missouri State Parks will develop similar measures for the Rock Island Trail State Park as well.

**ADJACENT LANDOWNER INFORMATION:
Landowner Compensation**

Federal courts have ruled that property owners whose land use is impacted as a result of a railbanking under the National Trails Act must be compensated. Landowners seeking that compensation must file a claim for compensation in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in Washington, D.C. Those lawsuits are filed against only the federal government and not against the railroad, the trail sponsor or any other party. The funds for the compensation come from the “Judgment Fund” at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which is appropriated every year by Congress to pay the liabilities of the United States. Landowners seeking to pursue compensation may wish to contact a private attorney to discuss potential options.

As of October 2022, a number of landowners along the Rock Island Trail State Park have already received compensation and others have pending claims that are awaiting resolution.



Scan or click the QR code
for adjacent landowner information.



Soap Creek Bridge



Hay field near Henley

NOTABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

WINDSOR TO VERSAILLES

38 Miles

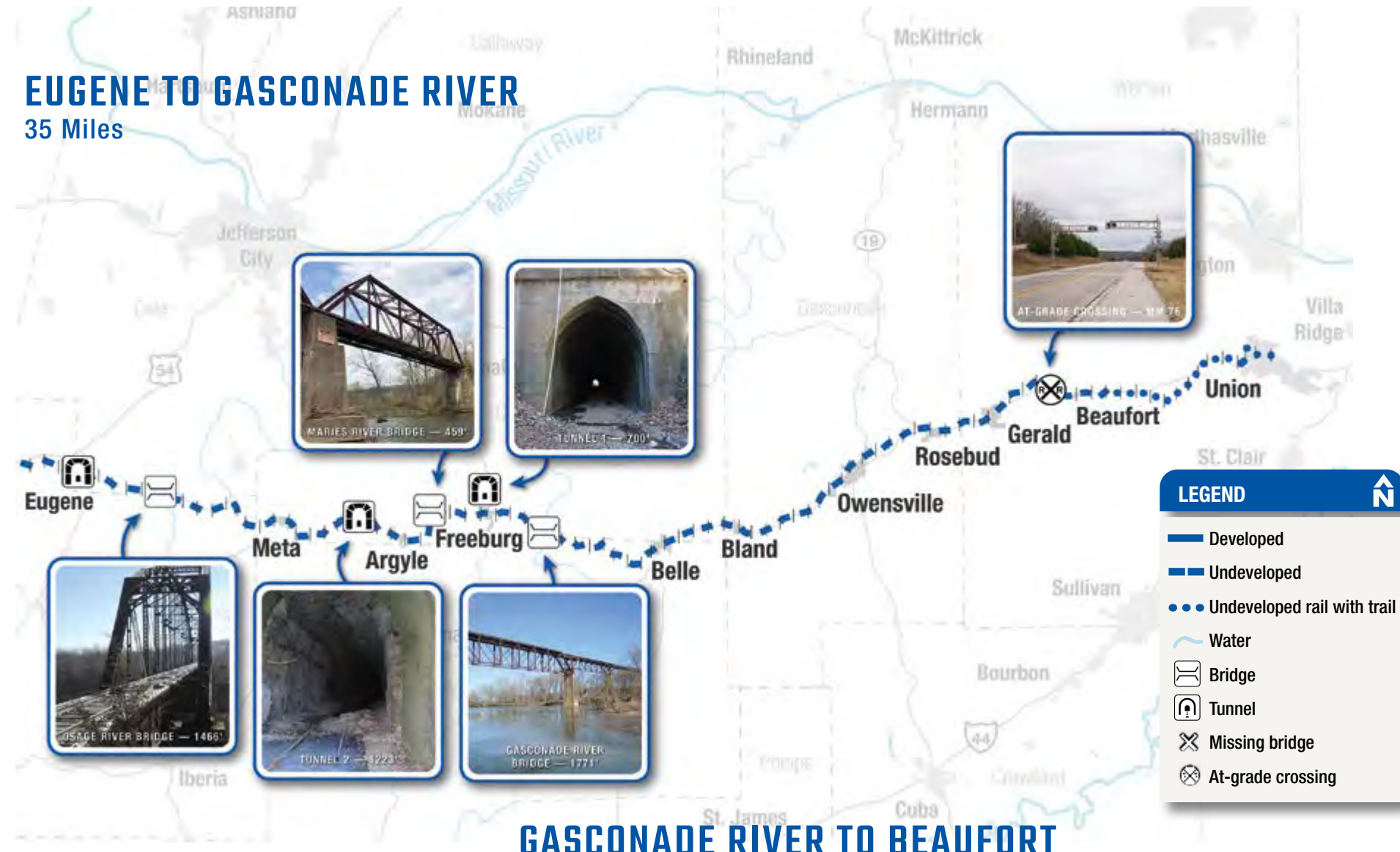


VERSAILLES TO EUGENE

28 Miles

EUGENE TO GASCONADE RIVER

35 Miles



GASCONADE RIVER TO BEAUFORT

43 Miles

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE – CONTINUITY OF DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL DESIGN INFORMATION

Trailheads and the trailbed will be developed consistently across the park using specifications previously exercised on the former Rock Island Spur of Katy Trail State Park. Trailheads along the corridor will accommodate public-use features including but not limited to parking, information depots, restrooms and potable water. However, some features may be limited, depending on the size of the available development area, the difficulty in accessing the area, and the presence of utilities in the area. The trailbed will be constructed to support emergency and maintenance vehicle passage. For communities interested in developing a portion of the trail and/or trailhead, a trail use license agreement will be required, along with adherence to trailhead and trailbed design standards. For more information, please contact moparks@dnr.mo.gov.



Rock Island Trail State Park trailhead

3D TRAILHEAD GRAPHIC

The 3D models below give an impression of what a Rock Island Trail State Park trailhead might look like with 50 feet of available development area from the centerline of the trail to the edge of the right of way.



GRANTS AWARDED

Many communities along Rock Island Trail State Park have already received grant assistance for development. Below is an active list of grants awarded to these communities as of December 2022.

City of Belle – A Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant of \$175,194 for 2022

This grant funds construction of 1.6 miles of trail in accordance with Missouri State Parks specifications, including the addition of signage, trailhead with gravel parking (ADA parking and connection trail), trash cans and water bottle stations. This grant is awarded by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration and is administered by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

City of Eldon – A Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant of \$250,000 for 2022

This grant funds construction of 1.3 miles of trail in accordance with Missouri State Parks specifications. It also funds the rehab of a maintenance shed into a bicycle service center and storage/charging facility; the construction of additional parking, including ADA accessible parking; and the installation of signage, barriers, lighting and security cameras. This grant is awarded by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration and is administered by Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

City of Owensville – A Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant of \$500,000 for 2022

The grant funds construction of approximately 2.4 miles of trail in accordance with Missouri State Parks specifications. This grant is awarded by the U.S. Federal Highway Administration and administered by the Missouri Department of Transportation.

The cities of Cole Camp, Stover, Versailles, Barnett, Belle, Bland, Owensville, Rosebud and Gerald – A Missouri Physical Activity and Nutrition Program (MPAN) Grant of \$10,000 for each town for 2022

These grants support the strategy of establishing new or improved pedestrian and bicycle systems that connect everyday destinations (active transportation planning, signs, bike racks, paint, gravel, benches, water filling stations, etc.). This grant is awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administered by Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

ADDITIONAL GRANT INFORMATION

Local governments, schools and universities, and not-for-profit organizations interested in trail development and/or providing recreational amenities are encouraged to take advantage of outdoor recreation grants administered by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MoDNR), including the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Additional federal pass-through grant opportunities may be available to corridor communities through other state agencies such as the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MoDHSS).

For additional grant opportunities and technical support please contact your Regional Planning Commission.

- East-West Gateway Council of Governments (<https://www.ewgateway.org/>)
- Meramec Regional Planning Commission (<https://www.meramecregion.org/>)
- Mid-Missouri Regional Planning Commission (<https://www.midmorp.org/>)
- Lake of the Ozarks Council of Local Governments (<https://locfg.org/>)

- Kaysinger Basin Regional Planning Commission (<https://kaysinger.com/>)
- Pioneer Trails Regional Planning Commission (<https://www.trailsrpc.org/>)

ADDITIONAL PLANNING INFORMATION



For outdoor recreation or natural resource conservation technical planning assistance please contact ashley_newson@nps.gov with the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails

and Conservation Assistance Program (<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm>).

Services provided include:

- Project Guidance
- Strategic Planning
- Partnership Development
- Greenway & Trail Planning
- Park & Water Access Planning
- Conceptual Plans & Renderings
- Funding Strategies
- Community Outreach and Engagement
- Open Space and Landscape Conservation



Scan or click the QR code to for grant information

ROCK ISLAND TRAIL STATE PARK – POTENTIAL TRAILHEADS



1

WINDSOR

INCORPORATED: 1873
POPULATION: 2,976
ELEVATION: 892'
MILE MARKER: 215.55 - 216
COORDINATES: 38.531601, -93.52257

Windsor is a place of intersection. Five state highways come together there, and it is also where Katy Trail and the Rock Island Trail state parks intersect. Originally known as Belmont, the name changed to Windsor in 1859. Main Street was once an old pioneer trail cut by wagon wheels traversing the territory, which created the northwest and southeast axes of the town's layout.

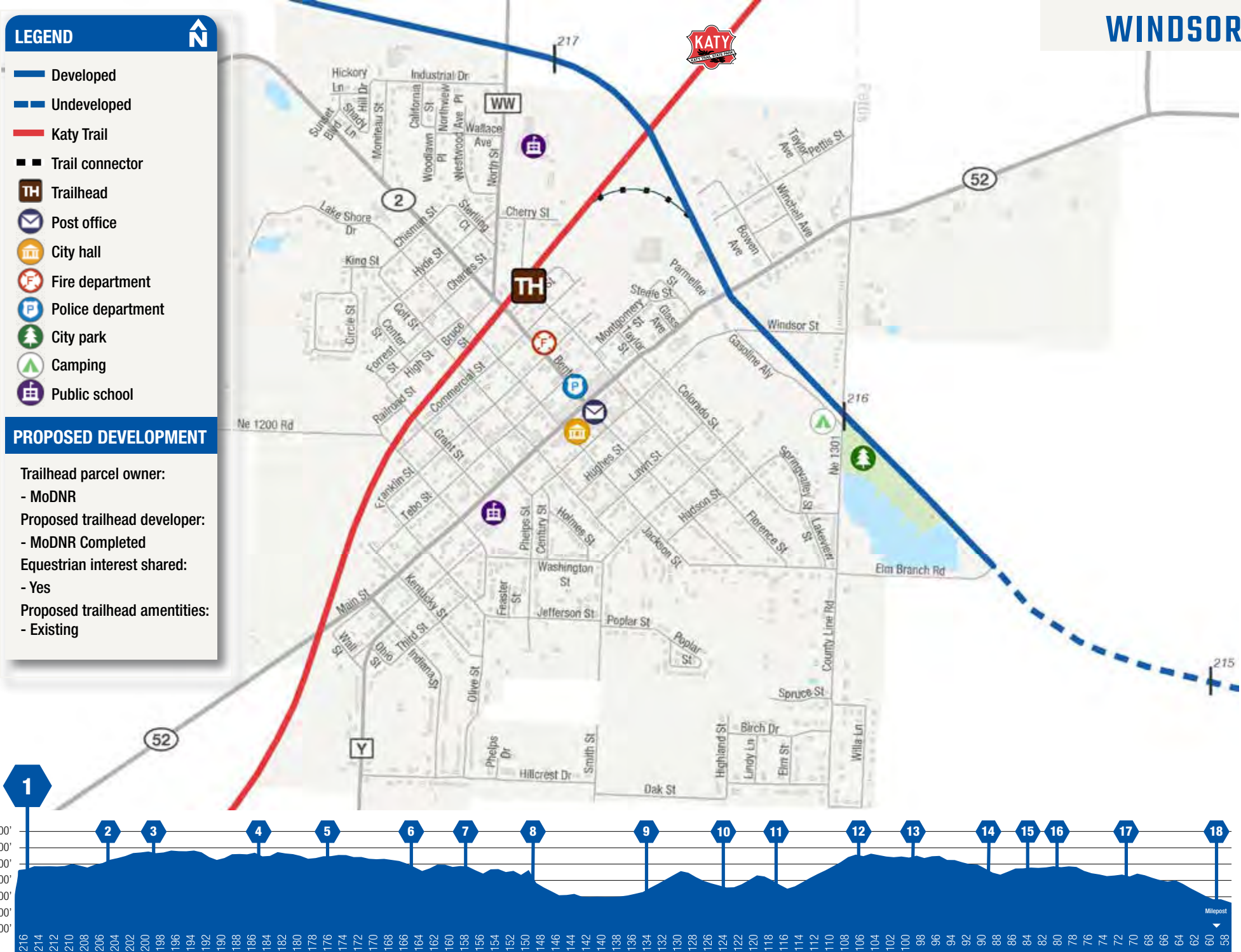
Rock Island Trail State Park passes Farrington Park. Historically, a reservoir at Farrington Park was used to supply water for the steam locomotives. Eventually the grounds became a city park in 1954. The park was named after J.D. Farrington, the president of the Rock Island Railroad at the time.

Windsor is an active community. The city hosts many events throughout the year, including rodeos, parades and trail rides. The town is in close proximity to Truman Lake, Whiteman Air Force Base and a large Amish community. Near the trailhead of Katy Trail and Rock Island Trail state parks is an historic caboose, cabin rentals and restaurants. Farrington Park offers camping, fishing, a playground, paddleboats, horseshoe pits, tennis courts, a basketball court and lots of room for picnics.

- Development Challenges
- Minimal development challenges



Downtown Windsor



WINDSOR

Community Photos



2

IONIA

INCORPORATED: 1904
POPULATION: 75
ELEVATION: 941’
MILE MARKER: 205.27 - 205.55
COORDINATES: 38.502733, -93.323503

Ionias was originally known as Peel Tree and located entirely in Pettis County. Eventually, the name changed to Iona City and then to Ionia in 1895. In 1904, the community moved south, partially into Benton County, with the development of the Rock Island Railroad. The community grew to a population of 150 by 1929. Located within the town were a grade school, a bank, a theater, a hotel and two churches.

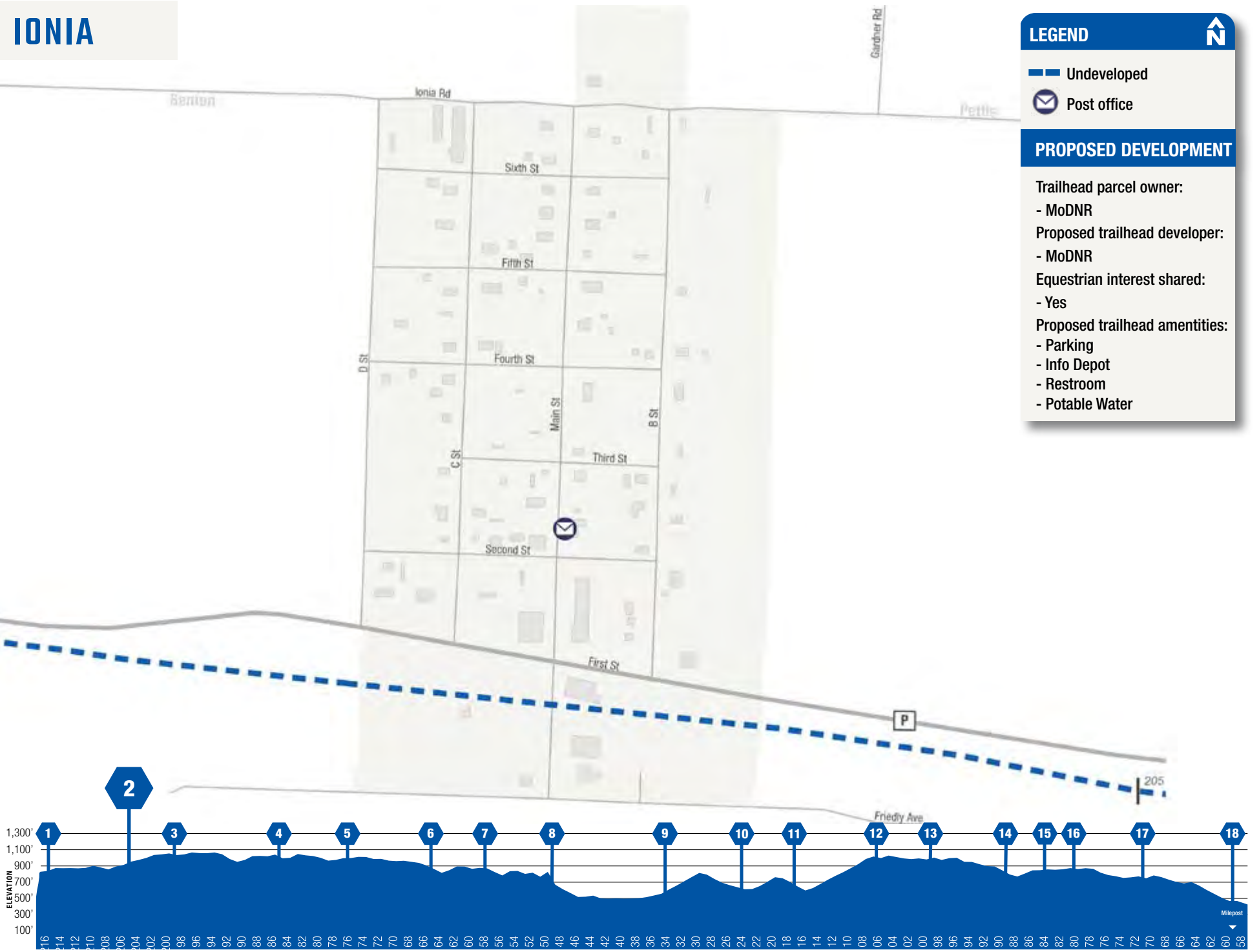
Ionias is located between Windsor and Cole Camp and has several prairies nearby, including those at Drovers Prairie, Paint Brush Prairie, Grandfather Prairie and Hi Lonesome Prairie conservation areas. The latter, Hi Lonesome, is four miles east of Ionia along Rock Island Trail State Park.

West of Ionia, Rock Island Trail crosses Highway P and continues into town. There is an old mill residing just south of the corridor.

- Development Challenges**
- Trailhead development

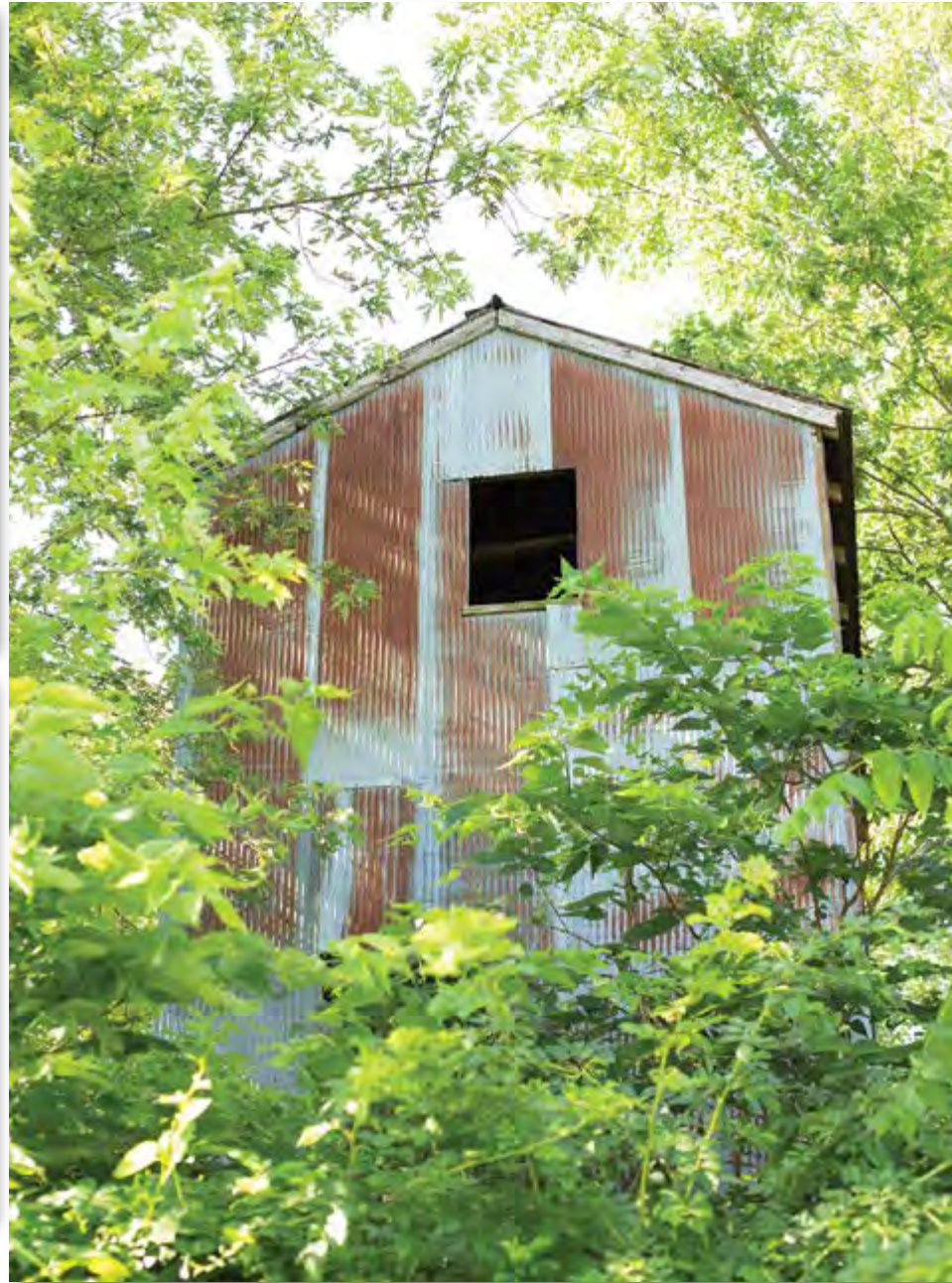


Water Tower in Ionia



IONIA

Community Photos



3

COLE CAMP

INCORPORATED:

1897

POPULATION:

1,334

ELEVATION:

1,046

MILE MARKER:

199, 1.5 Miles South

COORDINATES:

38.460108, -93.207594

In the 1840s, immigrants came from Hanover Province, Germany, and settled the area south of Cole Camp’s current location. Soon after, a trading post was established along the Butterfield Overland Mail stagecoach line, which ran from 1856 to 1861.

In 1880, the narrow-gauge Pacific Railroad was built on the north side of town, and many businesses moved to new locations along the rail line. Around 1902, the railroad was upgraded to standard track, eventually becoming part of the Missouri Pacific Railroad. In 1904, the Rock Island Railroad was established, connecting Cole Camp to Ionia and Stover. A depot was constructed in town and included a side track and stockyards. The Rock Island served as a major freight line, further developing agricultural and business interests.

Today, the Rock Island Trail State Park is located 2 miles north of the historic downtown. The downtown has many services and businesses along Highway 52 and Maple Street, including restaurants, banks, a pharmacy, stores, a golf course, a public library, a senior center, an art gallery, public and Lutheran schools, a winery, a skilled nursing care center, an ambulance district and a community newspaper. There are two community parks: Butterfield Park and Ezekiel Williams Park, the latter having a swimming pool. The Cole Camp Historical Museum is located downtown on South Maple.

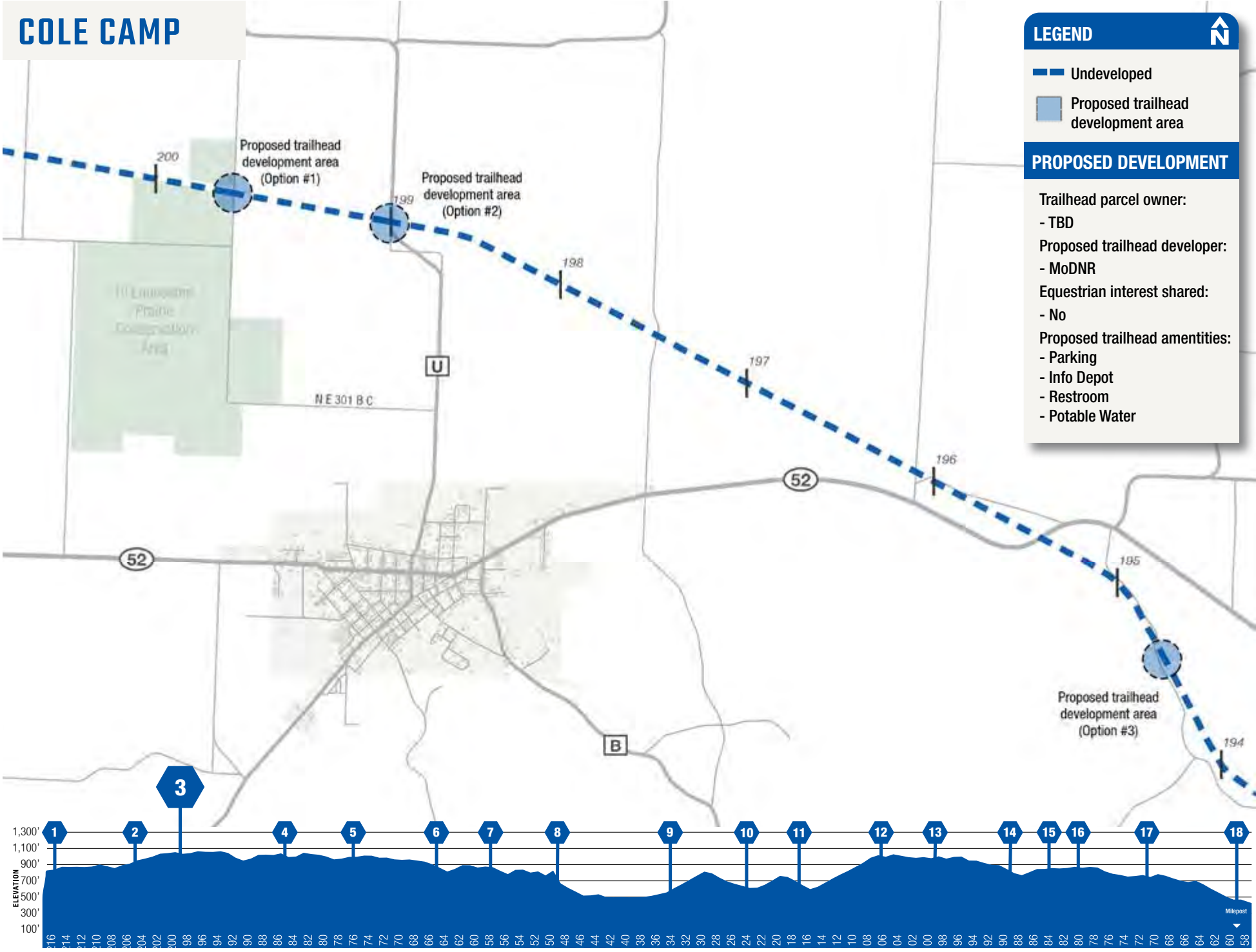
Many visitors frequent Cole Camp as they travel to the Lake of the Ozarks or Truman Lake. North of the town and along Rock Island Trail State Park is Hi Lonesome Prairie Conservation Area, which has been designated by Audubon Missouri as an Important Bird Area.

Development Challenges

- Missing bridge over Highway 52 east of Cole Camp
- Trailhead development
- Connector trail from Cole Camp to the Rock Island Trail State Park



Downtown Cole Camp



COLE CAMP

Community Photos



4 STOVER

INCORPORATED: 1903
POPULATION: 1,004
ELEVATION: 1,049
MILE MARKER: 185.30 - 186.25
COORDINATES: 38.440873, -92.990267

The town of Stover was named after U.S. Rep. Col. John Hubler Stover and was originally situated somewhere to the southwest of its current position. The town moved with the construction of the Rock Island Railroad and was incorporated in 1903. With the development of the railroad, new businesses flourished. Two of these businesses - Fajen Lumber Co. Inc. and Stover Milling Co. Inc - are still in operation today.

Entering the town from the west, the corridor crosses a 183-foot bridge just outside of the city limits. The corridor passes just to the south of downtown and borders several local businesses. An old hammer mill sits next to the corridor. The old depot was located just south of the mill.

Stover has a quaint downtown one block from the corridor. Several buildings have been restored, including an old Skelly station and The Osage Theater. A few blocks north are restaurants, convenience stores and a city park. The town is home to many events and hosted the first ever Rock Island Fest in October 2022.

Development Challenges

- 183-foot bridge 0.25 mile west of Stover
- At-grade crossing at Highway 135



Stover

STOVER



STOVER

Community Photos



5

VERSAILLES

INCORPORATED: 1878
POPULATION: 2,983
ELEVATION: 1,010
MILE MARKER: 176.40 – 178.75
COORDINATES: 38.431862, -92.840773

Named after Versailles, France, this community has had a long history of transportation lines running through it. In 1846, Versailles was a stop for a stagecoach line from Springfield, Mo. to Jefferson City. In 1880, the Versailles-Boonville line of the Missouri Pacific was completed. In 1903, the Rock Island Line was established in time for transportation from Versailles to the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis. The railroad construction stimulated the economy, as many workers flocked to the area. Local merchants and farmers prospered, and Versailles began to grow.

Rock Island Trail State Park is located near downtown, where businesses, restaurants and a local brewery can be found. The community is also home to the Royal Theatre, which hosts fine arts, locally produced plays and musical entertainment, as well as professional acts throughout the year. The Morgan County Historical Society Museum is housed in the old Martin Hotel, a few blocks from Rock Island Trail State Park.

Versailles is just north of the Lake of the Ozarks and just south of a large Mennonite community. Entering the city from the west, the state park borders Hite Prairie Conservation Area and Rock Island Trail State Park passes the city park. Versailles has a biking and sidewalk network that will connect state park trail users to the town’s many amenities.

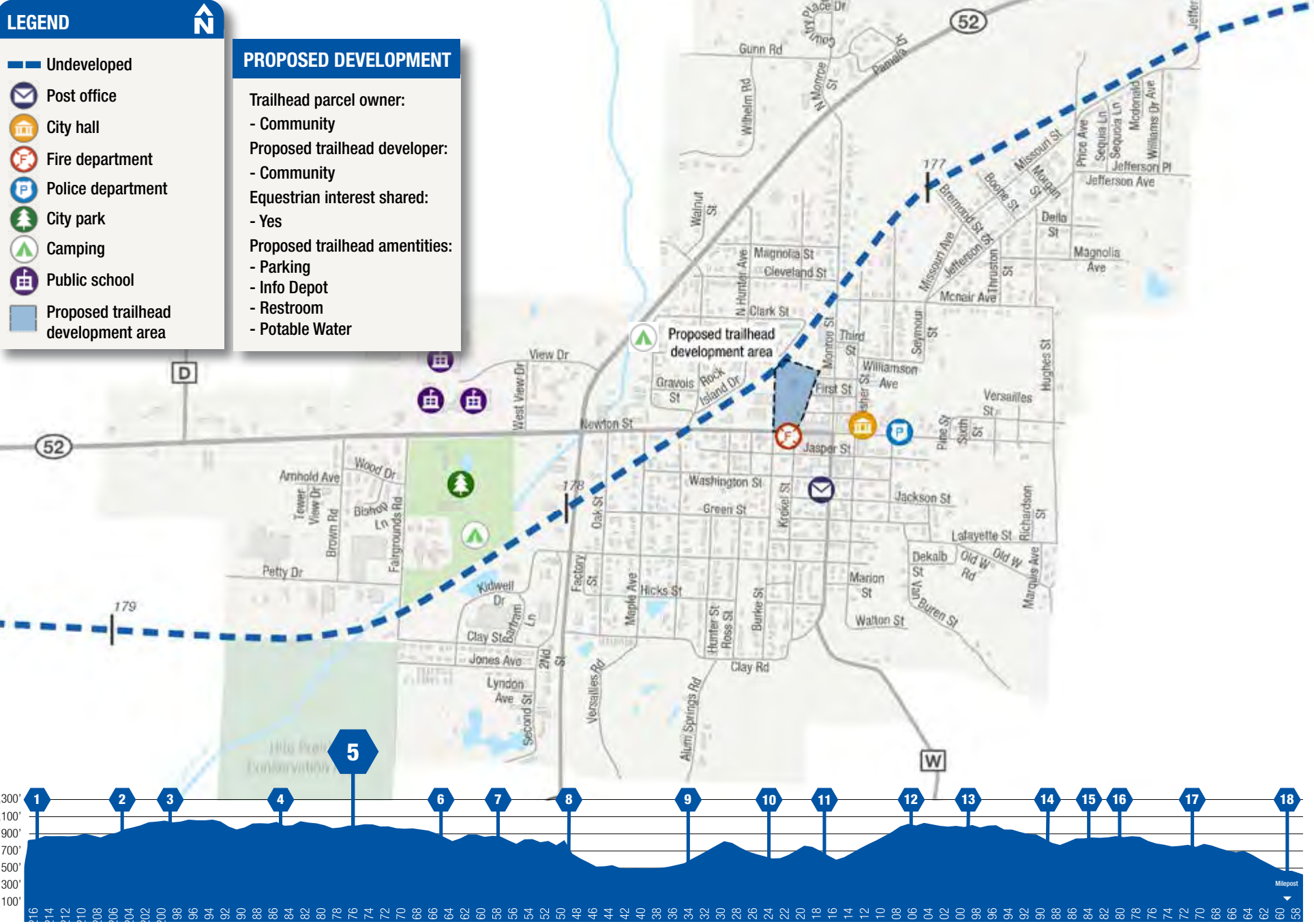
The town hosts a variety of events for families throughout the year, such as an open-air market, an annual free concert in the park, a Fourth of July fireworks extravaganza and an annual rodeo. The Versailles Olde Tyme Apple Festival has been voted best festival in the state of Missouri and is held yearly on the first Saturday in October.

- Development Challenges
- At-grade crossing on Highway 5



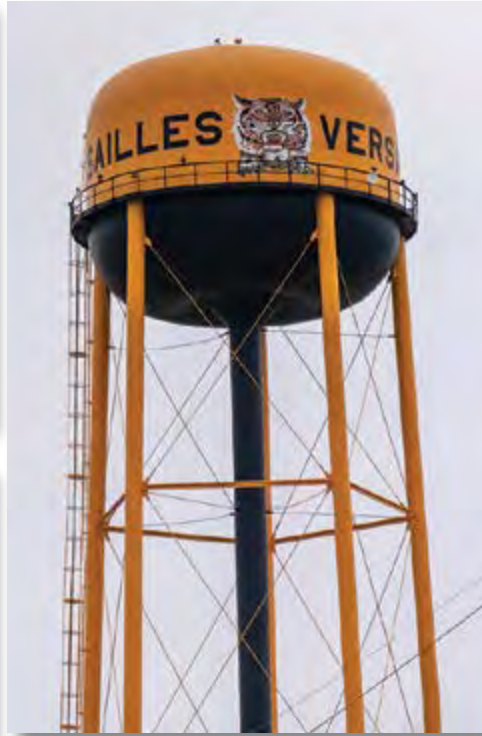
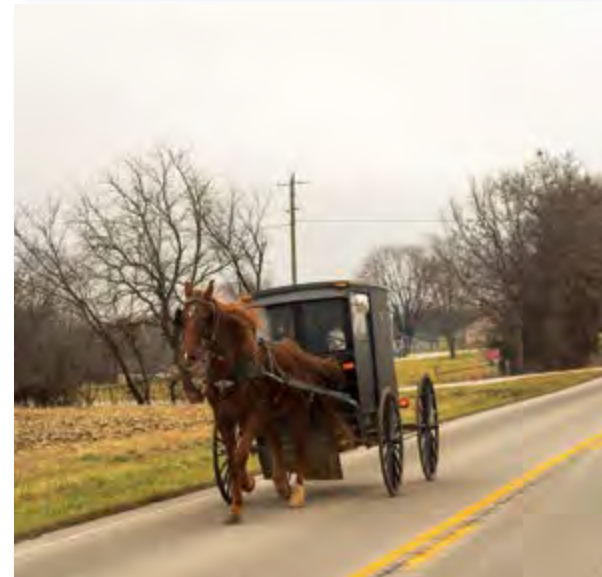
Courthouse in Versailles

VERSAILLES



VERSAILLES

Community Photos



6

BARNETT

INCORPORATED: 1961
POPULATION: 226
ELEVATION: 971
MILE MARKER: 165.6 - 166.3
COORDINATES: 38.378704, -92.674725

Originally located about 1 mile north on Highway AA and named Barnettsville, the founding community was destroyed by a cyclone in 1880. By 1889, the community had recovered with a population of 30.

With the arrival of the Rock Island Railroad in 1901, the community moved to its current location and changed its name to Barnett. The town grew to a population of 227 by 1929 and saw the establishment of a bank, a hotel, a livery stable, restaurants, a department store and a grain elevator. The railroad acted as the town’s delivery system, as it was common practice for the train to deliver packages to residents by leaving them on the depot platform to be picked up.

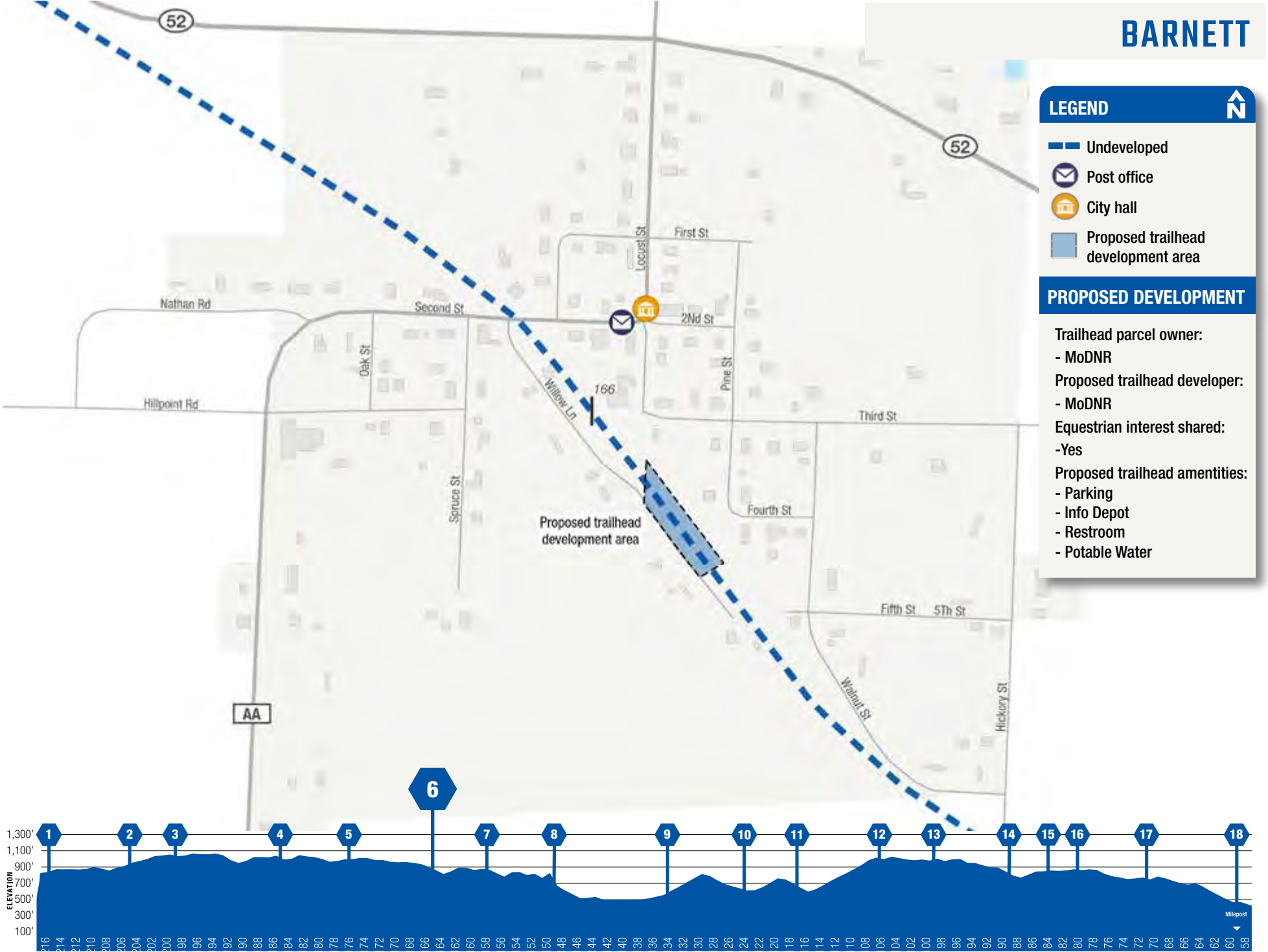
Located on the east side of Morgan County near the Miller County line, Barnett is just seven miles from the Lake of the Ozarks. It sits on the dividing line between flowing prairie and the foothills of the Ozarks.

Before entering the city limits, the state park trail runs parallel to Highway 52, approaching the town from the northwest. Rock Island Trail State Park passes through downtown, where several original buildings still exist.

- Development Challenges
- At-grade crossing on Highway AA
 - Hickory Street crossing



Post Office in Barnett



BARNETT

Community Photos



7

ELDON

INCORPORATED: 1904
POPULATION: 4,671
ELEVATION: 928
MILE MARKER: 158.30 - 161.55
COORDINATES: 38.349455, -92.580546

The Rock Island Railroad played an important role in Eldon's early years, connecting the community to larger markets and providing an outlet through which local farmers and merchants could sell their crops, livestock and goods. Eldon grew at a fast rate with the construction of the railroad. During construction, track was being laid at a rate of 1 mile per day. The city of Eldon also grew at a fast pace. Homes were built for railroad workers, and new local businesses flourished. In 1900, the population was 379, but by 1904, the population had increased to 1,566.

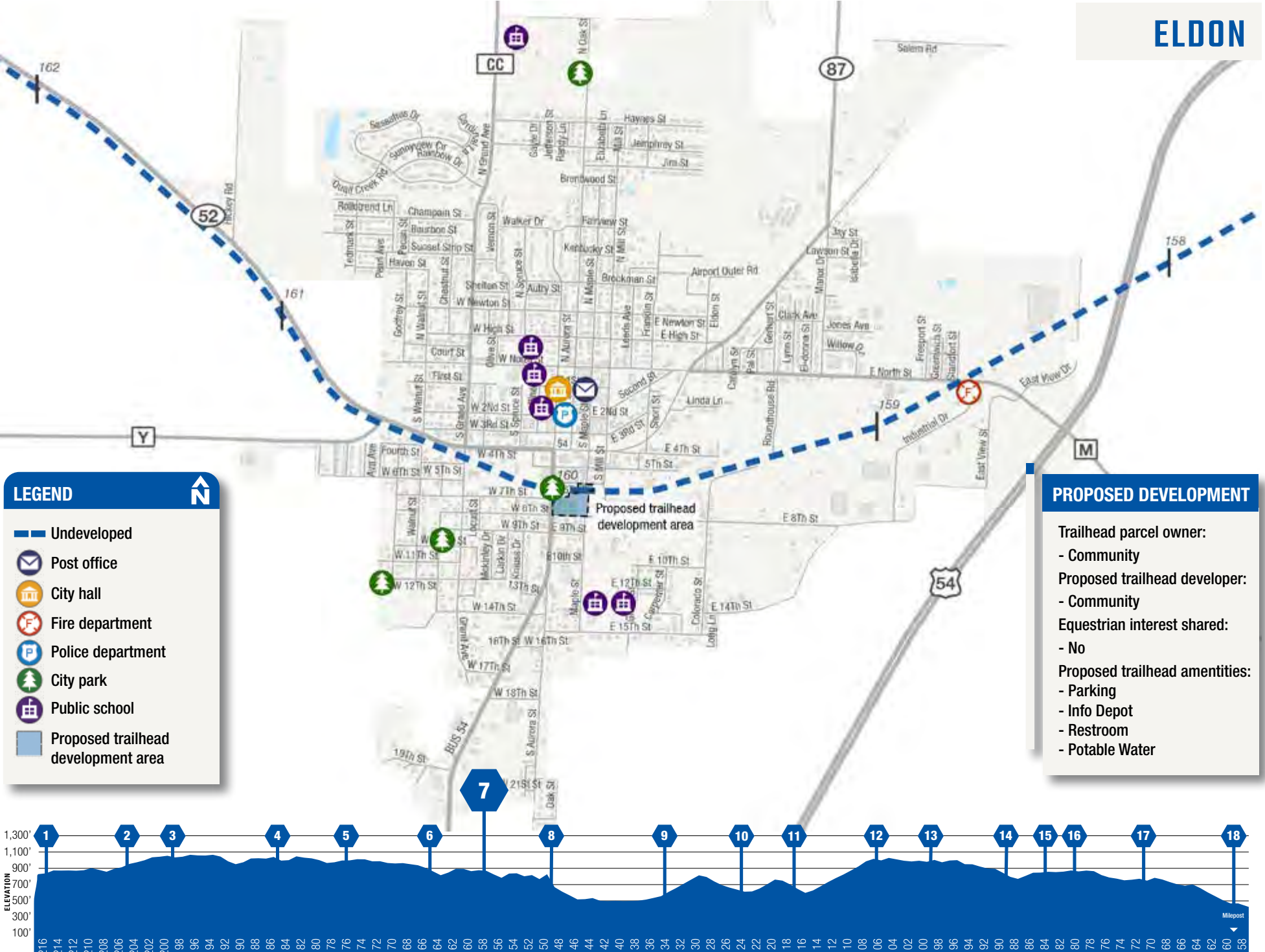
Although the railroad no longer exists, the Rock Island has remained a part of the town. The city of Eldon has developed the Eldon Depot Welcome Center at the same site as the 1950s depot location. The city has also established Rock Island Park, which has undergone significant transformation to become the recreation hub and outdoor community center for Eldon. This park was the location for the historic signing of the interim trail use agreement and the governor's announcement of the acceptance of the Rock Island Trail State Park.

Eldon has many community-oriented shops, restaurants, professional services and civic destinations. Most destinations in Eldon are within walking and bicycling distance from one another, and the state park will serve as an active transportation route for both local residents and people traveling through Eldon.

- Development Challenges
- At-grade crossing on Business Highway 54



Eldon City Park



ELDON

Community Photos



8

EUGENE

INCORPORATED: 1904
POPULATION: Unincorporated
ELEVATION: 790
MILE MARKER: 149.82 – 149.10
COORDINATES: 38.35345, -92.404041

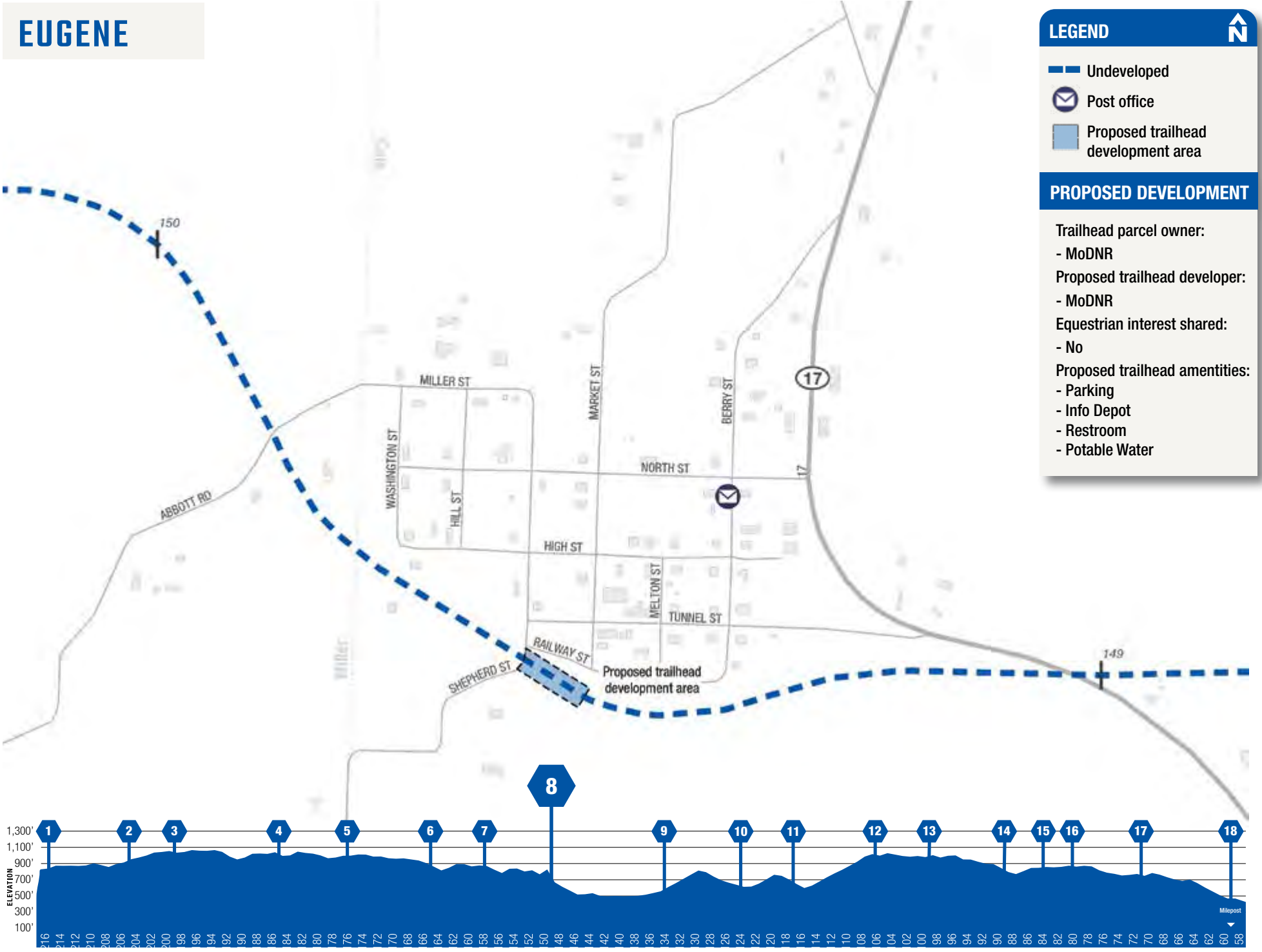
Named after Eugene Simpson, the original landowner, the town was incorporated on Aug. 3, 1904, after the construction of the Rock Island Railroad. The town eventually accommodated a grade school, high school, bank, hotel, post office and church. Historically, commodities shipped from the area included agricultural products and raw materials such as limestone. Traveling east, Eugene is the last community on Rock Island Trail State Park before it descends into the Osage River valley.

Today, the unincorporated community is home to a post office and two churches. A 1,665-foot tunnel resides a half-mile east of the community and is the longest tunnel on the state park. Eugene is 21 miles southwest of Jefferson City and 13 miles east of Eldon.

- Development Challenges
- 1,665-foot Eugene tunnel
 - Trailhead development



Tunnel at Eugene



EUGENE

Community Photos



9

META

INCORPORATED: 1959
POPULATION: 172
ELEVATION: 603
MILE MARKER: 1134.30 - 134.93
COORDINATES: 38.311877, -92.165892

Meta is located in the western portion of Osage County on the foot of the ridge sloping along Sugar Creek. Construction for the railroad began in early 1901. There was considerable doubt among some locals that a railroad could be constructed on such rough, hilly terrain, but in the early spring of 1903, the first train laid the track through Meta to a point near Sugar Creek. For a time, Meta was the terminus of the railroad, and a Y was located in the Sugar Creek bottoms. After a few years, service was extended westward to Kansas City. With the arrival of the Rock Island Railroad, Meta became a thriving valley town. The mostly Catholic inhabitants came from the neighboring towns of St. Thomas, Westphalia and Koelztown.

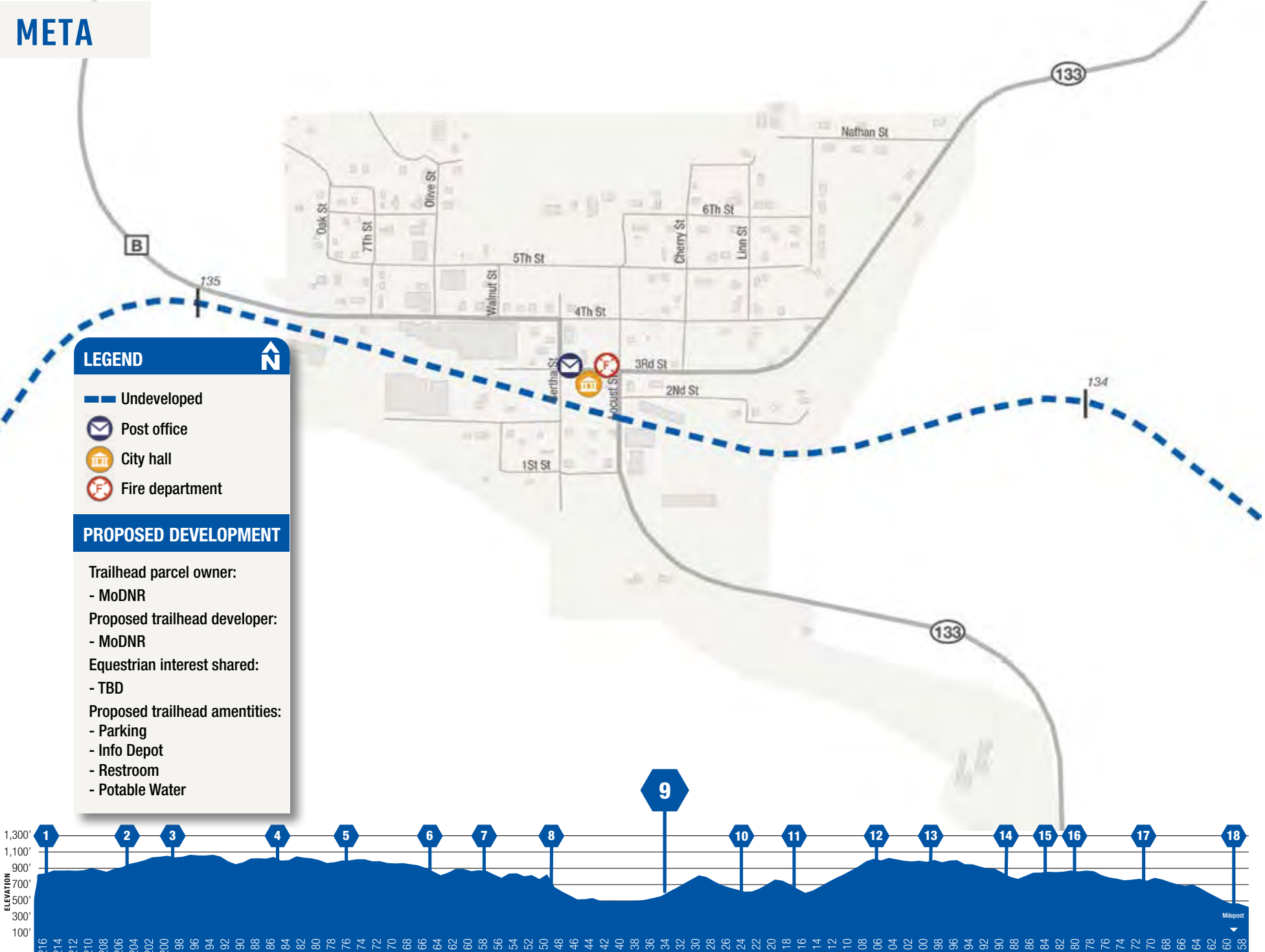
Development Challenges

- Trailhead development
- Avoid impact to local manufacturing and agricultural business



Meta

META



META

Community Photos



10

ARGYLE

INCORPORATED: 1908
POPULATION: 168
ELEVATION: 718
MILE MARKER: 124.87 - 125.76
COORDINATES: 38.29433, -92.023134

Argyle was originally known as Campbell's Switch, named after John Campbell, a railroad engineer who resided within the area. During this time, a few stores were in operation along with a brick kiln. The community was later renamed Argyle, after the Duke of Argyle, by a local Irish farmer, John Connor.

After the construction of the Rock Island Railroad, the town grew to accommodate a saloon, general store, milling company, lumberyard, church and school. Agricultural products shipped from the community included wheat, corn and livestock.

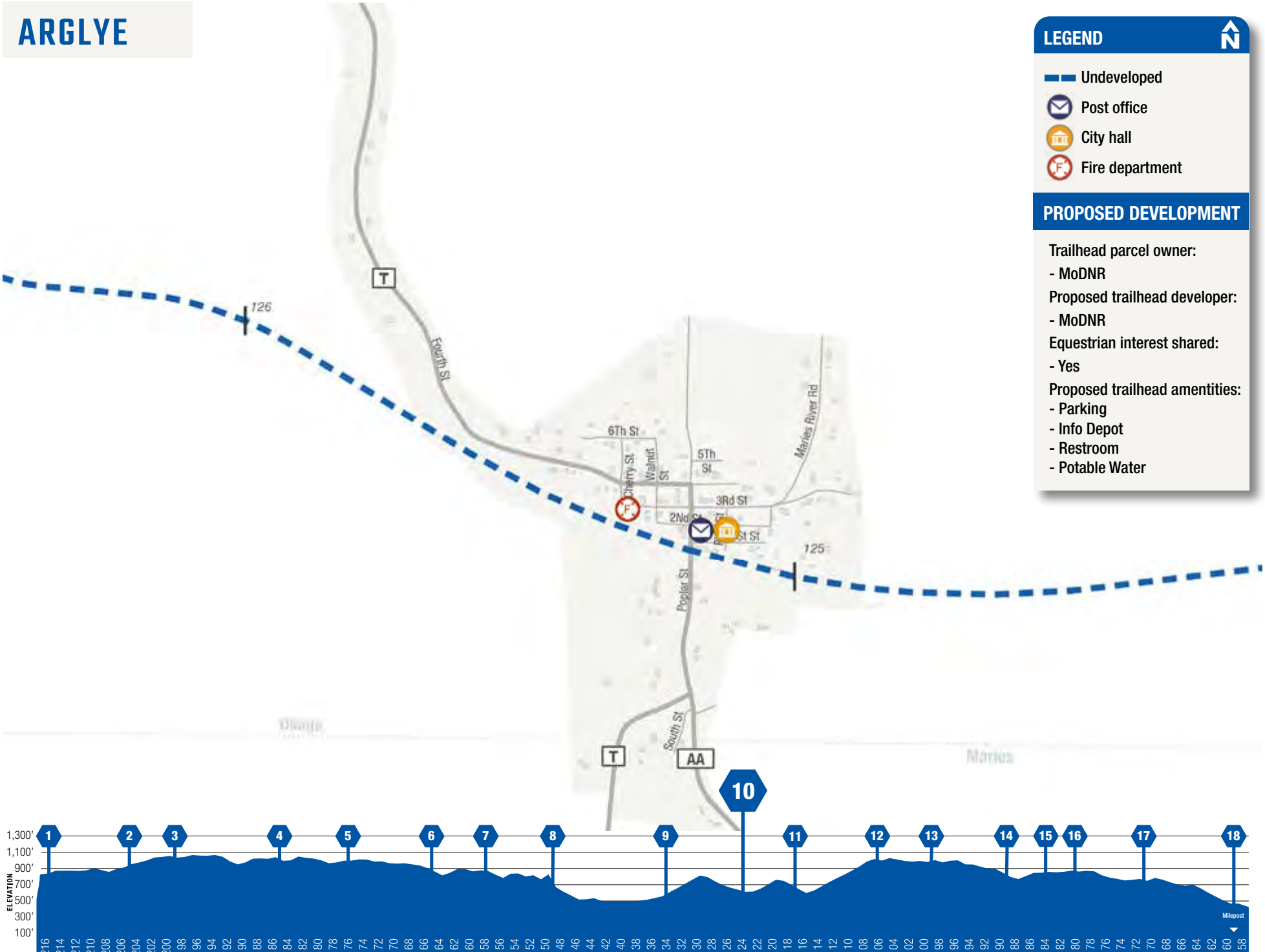
The 1,223-foot Argyle tunnel is located 3 miles west of town. This tunnel was left unlined, and trains had to stop to clear fallen rocks from the tracks. A railroad worker would be dropped off at this location to spend the day removing rocks for the returning trains. East of the tunnel, the state park follows Loose Creek as it comes into town. Argyle is 30 miles southeast of Jefferson City and 35 miles northwest of Rolla.

Development Challenges

- At-grade crossing at Highway AA
- Trailhead development



Sinclair station in Argyle, Missouri



ARGYLE

Community Photos



11

FREEBURG

INCORPORATED: 1909
POPULATION: 426
ELEVATION: 800
MILE MARKER: 117.9 - 118.8
COORDINATES: 38.313206, -91.921797

Settled by German immigrants in the 1850s, this small community started to grow with the establishment of a store and post office by 1886. The community was originally known as Engelbert, named after Englebert Franke, who founded the post office. In 1888, the name changed to Frankberg and then once more to Freeburg, with “Free” being the English translation for the German “Franke.” In 1902, the Rock Island Railroad was built through the community; however, the majority of the rail line is located in a tunnel under the community.

After the construction of the Rock Island, the community continued to grow. In 1904, the town saw the organization of a Catholic parish and the construction of a school, a hotel, a bank, a newspaper, mills, a grain elevator and various other businesses. Historically, commodities shipped from the area included agricultural products and raw materials such as iron ore.

U.S. Route 63 runs through Freeburg,traveling above the 700-foot tunnel. Freeburg is 27 miles southeast of Jefferson City and 35 miles northwest of Rolla.

- Development Challenges
- 700-foot Freeburg tunnel



Holy Family parish in Freeburg



FREEBURG

FREEBURG

Community Photos



12 BELLE

INCORPORATED: 1901
POPULATION: 1,254
ELEVATION: 1,026
MILE MARKER: 106.35 - 104.70
COORDINATES: 38.286898, -91.719467

Originally known as Gallanago Prairie, Belle is located primarily in Maries County with a portion in Osage County. The first postmaster, J.S. Ridenhour, proposed three names for the post office, including Belle, Boy and Bey, with a preference for Belle. The community remained relatively small until the construction of the Rock Island Railroad. After construction of the railroad, the community grew to accommodate a grade school, high school, weekly newspaper, bank and hotel, along with four churches. Historically, commodities shipped from the area included agricultural products and raw materials such as fire clays. Once the Rock Island Railroad ceased operations, the community continued to grow with the help of intersecting highways 28 and 89.

Belle is located 38 miles southeast of Jefferson City and 26 miles north of Rolla. For those traveling west on the Rock Island Trail State Park, Belle is the last community on the corridor before the corridor descends into the Gasconade River valley.

Development Challenges

- Minimal development challenges



Belle



BELLE

Community Photos



13

BLAND

INCORPORATED: 1902
POPULATION: 454
ELEVATION: 1,017
MILE MARKER: 99.5 - 100.75
COORDINATES: 38.304042, -91.63502

Richard Parks Bland, 1835-1899, was anything but insipid, an idea his surname might imply. This man’s international reputation, political prominence and colorful personality led a Gasconade postmaster to name a town after him.

The village of Bland was born when the first official mail arrived on Aug. 17, 1877. The town’s birthplace was about a mile northeast of its current location, now just a wide spot in the road known as Old Bland. The site of the new town was selected when news came that the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad was being built across the state. According to the State Historical Society, a store, post office, blacksmith shop, mill and church were moved in anticipation of the railroad. The town was incorporated in 1902, with its first bank opening the same year. The first newspaper came off the press in 1904. In its early years, Bland was home to a broom factory, glove factory, shoe factory, distillery, cigar factory, bottling company, depot and lumberyard.

From the west, the state park parallels the north side of Highway 28 and passes just to the south of downtown. Several restaurants and convenience stores are located next to the corridor. Bland is located 48 miles southeast of Jefferson City and 31 miles northeast of Rolla.

- Development Challenges
- Minimal development challenges



Downtown Bland, Missouri

BLAND



BLAND

Community Photos



14

OWENSVILLE

INCORPORATED: 1911
POPULATION: 2,579
ELEVATION: 931
MILE MARKER: 89.25 - 93.25
COORDINATES: 38.348212, -91.500731

Francis Owen opened the first store in the area in partnership with Edward Luster. Unable to decide on a name for the community, the two men met for a game of horseshoes. The winner was to have the naming rights for the small village. Owen won the game. From the start, Owensville was a crossroads town. People traveled through this place from St. Louis to Springfield via the Springfield Road, from the ironworks at Maramec near St. James via the Old Iron Road, and to the docks in Hermann on the Missouri River.

By the turn of the century, the area had grown into a small and thriving community. Agricultural products and clay were among the first industries. The Rock Island Railroad reached Owensville in 1901 and provided more business opportunities to the community. Over the years, a number industries, including corncob pipes, shoes, clay products, plastics and commercial printing, have provided employment for local citizens.

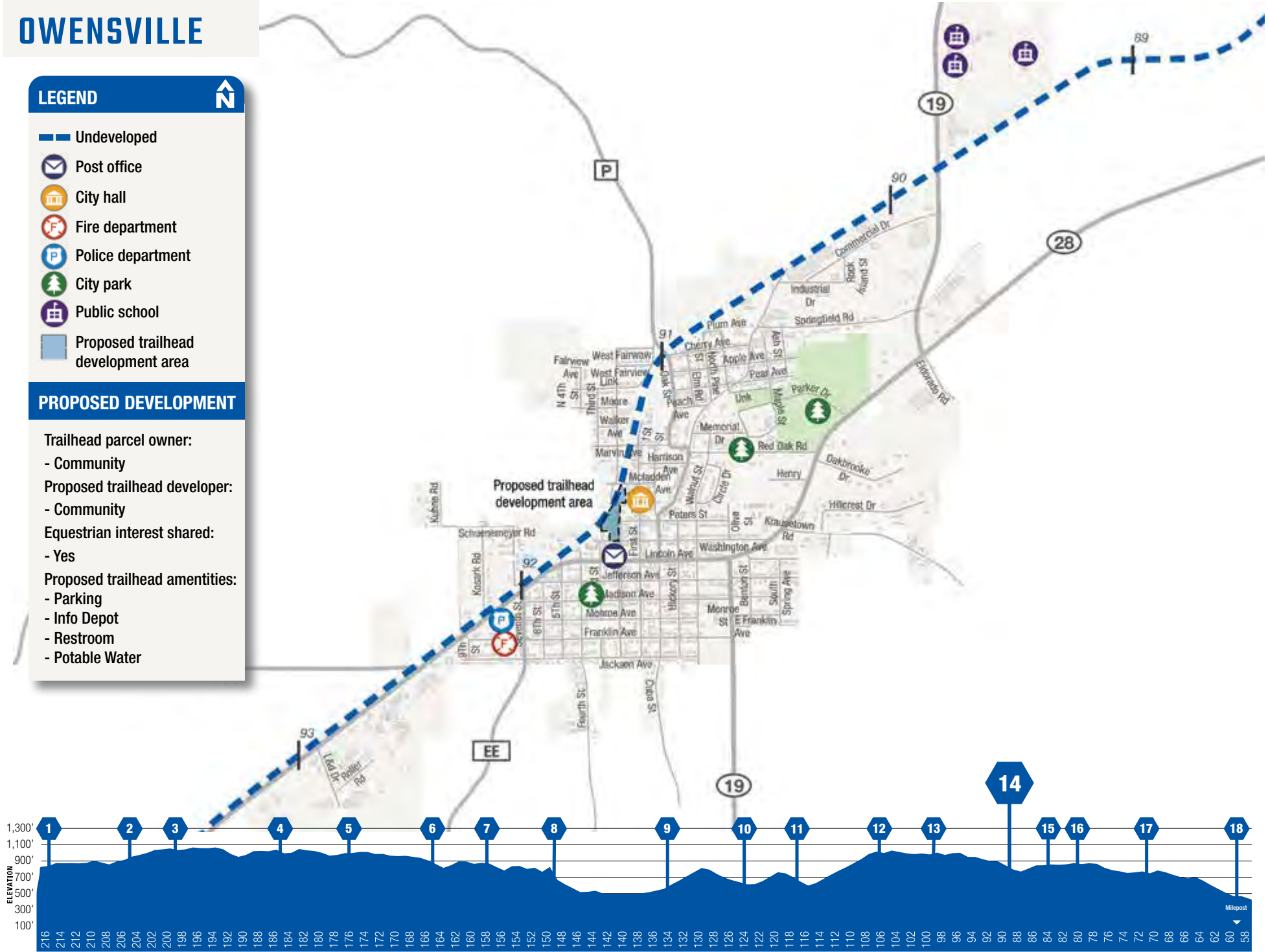
The state park runs adjacent to the HUB, the downtown heart of Owensville, where a variety of businesses, unique shops, restaurants, and bed and breakfasts are located. The local arts council maintains a theater on Main Street and present productions each year. Art Works on Main is a coalition of local artists who display and sell their artwork. The Gasconade County Historical Society Museum is located in the old Railroad Hotel.

A biking and walking network has been developed in the town and will connect trail users to the community and its many amenities. Owensville is home to three city parks. The community hosts many family and cultural events throughout the year, including Fourth of July fireworks, classic car shows, movies in the park, demolition derbies and a plein air arts event in October.

- Development Challenges
- Minimal development challenges



Downtown Owensville



OWENSVILLE

Community Photos



15

ROSEBUD

INCORPORATED: 1911

POPULATION: 627

ELEVATION: 882

MILE MARKER: 84.22 - 85.5

COORDINATES: 38.388199, -91.403428

Rosebud was once a small settlement in eastern Gasconade County, originally known as Snider’s Store. From 1870 to 1895, the community was referred to as Borbois, named after the nearby Bourbeuse River. With the arrival of the Rock Island Railroad, the name changed to Rosebud, as mail for the town was often mistakenly sent to the town of Bourbon.

After the development of the Rock Island Railroad, the community grew to accommodate a grade school, a parochial school, a hotel and churches. As businesses flourished, many agricultural products and raw materials, including fire clays and iron, were exported via the railroad.

West of Rosebud is the 182-foot bridge over Soap Creek. Just before the city limits, the corridor goes under U.S. Route 50 and then travels along the north side of town. On the east side of town, the corridor veers back toward the restaurants and antique stores that line U.S. Route 50. In recent years, Rosebud has become a destination for antique seekers.

- Development Challenges
- Limited space for trailhead development



Rosebud



ROSEBUD

Community Photos



16

GERALD

INCORPORATED: 1907
POPULATION: 1,104
ELEVATION: 895
MILE MARKER: 80 - 81.5
COORDINATES: 38.402275, -91.328764

Gerald was born because of the Rock Island Railroad. Prior to 1902, the community was known as Shotwell, with a post office located a few miles to the east of the railroad. When railroad construction began in the area, businesses and services began locating closer to the new tracks.

Rock Island Trail State Park bisects the town from east to west. This allows easy access to dining, lodging, other amenities and historic buildings. The town is known as the halfway point between St. Louis and Jefferson City along U.S. Route 50. Travelers often take a break in Gerald on this two-hour trip.

Gerald has a strong history of providing for itself. The city’s two picturesque parks, helipad, senior center and community outreach program were all developed through local fundraising. Gerald is also home to one of only three all-volunteer, all-donation libraries in Missouri. A dynamic chamber of commerce saved the last remaining Rock Island Railroad depot, and uses it as its headquarters.

Nearly every month, some organization in town hosts an area-wide event. Such events have included a rodeo, a Christmas parade of lights and a fall festival. Upcoming plans for the town include a splash pad and a bike route to connect the state park to local attractions.

- Development Challenges
- Minimal development challenges



Gerald

GERALD



GERALD

Community Photos



17

BEAUFORT

INCORPORATED: -
POPULATION: Unincorporated
ELEVATION: 820
MILE MARKER: 71.55
COORDINATES: 38.420791, -91.18888

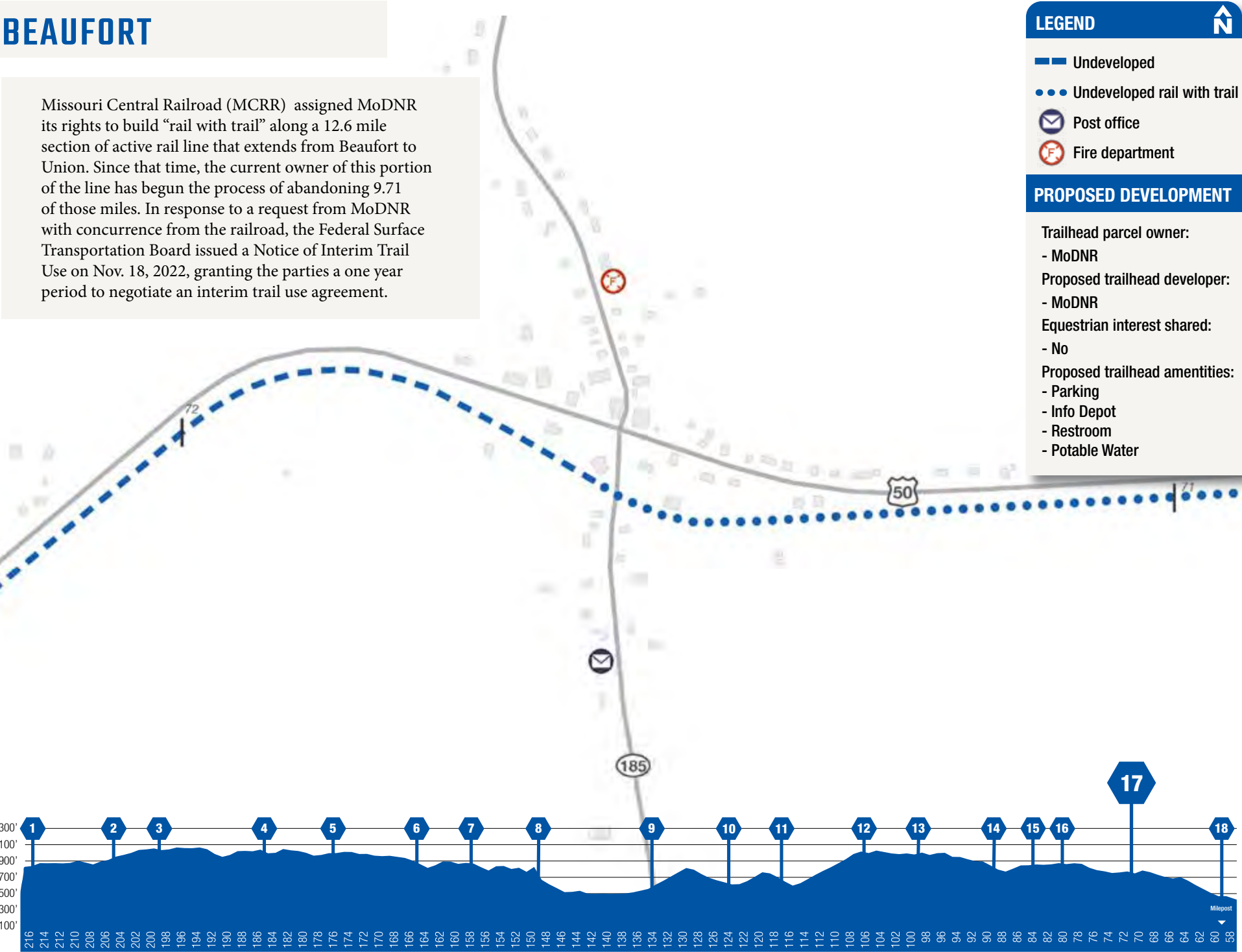
Established in 1849, a post office called Beaufort was located 2 miles north of the unincorporated community’s present-day location. In 1887, the St. Louis-Kansas City and Colorado Railroad was constructed nearby. Concerned for the town’s survival, a local store owner and a doctor purchased 40 acres of land adjacent to the railway for the town’s migration. H.E. Linstromberg, postmaster at the time, moved the post office to its new location, soon to be followed by local businesses and residents. The new town of Beaufort was officially platted in 1901.

Today, the unincorporated community, sitting at the intersection of U.S. Route 50 and Highway 185, accommodates a post office, feed store, grocery store and gas station. Beaufort is 9 miles west of Union and 19 miles north of Sullivan.

- Development Challenges
- Limited space for trailhead development



Beaufort



BEAUFORT

Community Photos



18

UNION

INCORPORATED: 1851
POPULATION: 12,348
ELEVATION: 537'
MILE MARKER: 59 - 61.8
COORDINATES: 38.444393, -91.008255

In the early 1800s, French and German immigrants flocked to Franklin County for its abundant resources, including the nearby Missouri, Meramec and Bourbeuse rivers. The area provided opportunities for commercial trapping, trading, and mining. In 1827, Union was established as the county seat.

In 1887, the St. Louis-Kansas City and Colorado Railroad was constructed through Union. Commodities shipped from the area included livestock, furniture and raw materials. The National Cob Pipe Works became Union's first successful factory, and was one of the largest tobacco pipe manufactures in the world, due to its location on Washington Avenue near the railway. The Hamilton Brown Shoe Co., one of the most successful businesses in the county, was also located near the rail line. Along with commerce, the railway provided residents the opportunity to explore the county and beyond, and brought travelers and conventions to town.

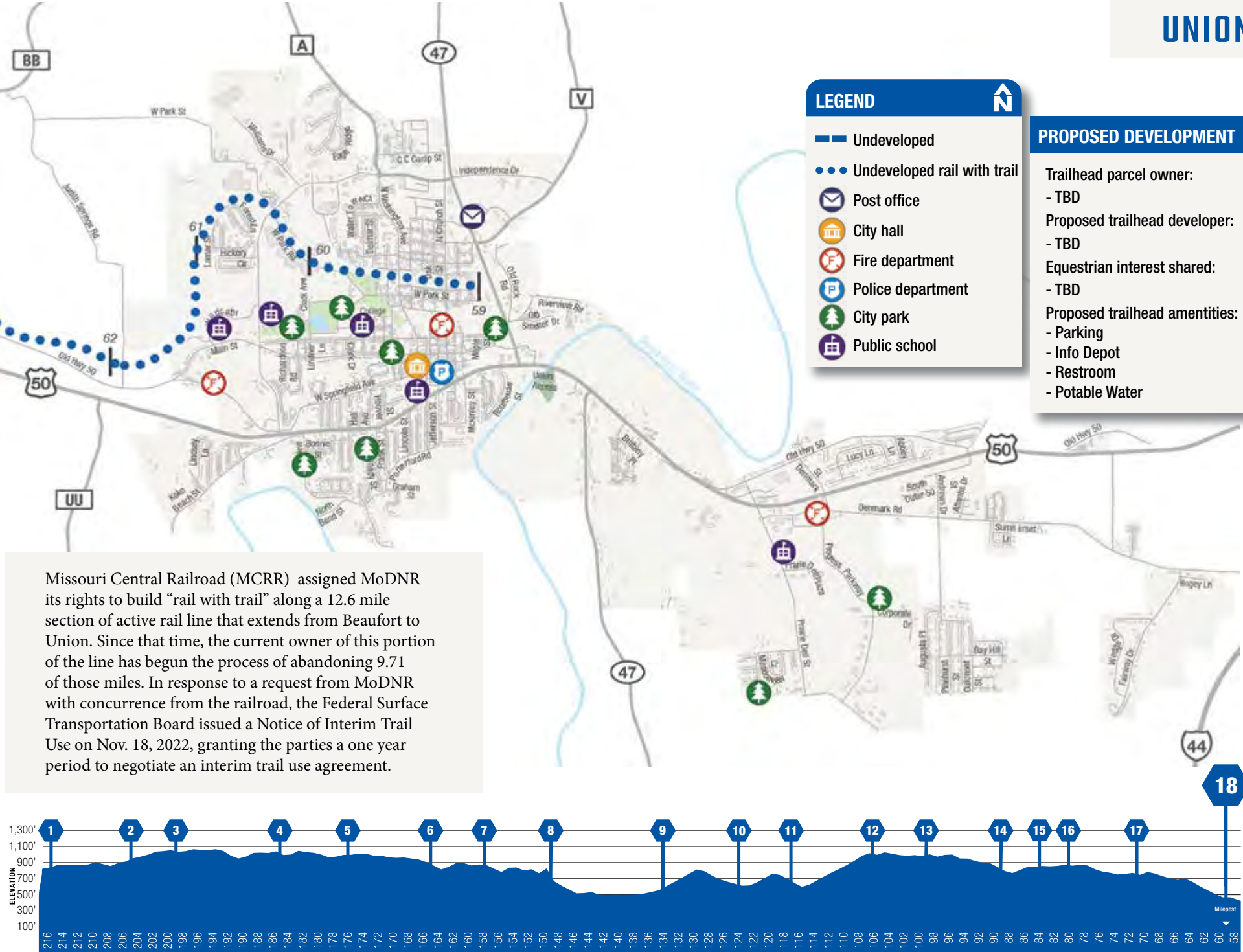
By the start of the 21st century, more than 300 successful businesses were established in Union. Some of the city's largest employers include manufacturing firms and public service agencies like Franklin County Government, Union R-XI School District and East Central College.

Rock Island Trail State Park enters Union from the southwest, quickly traversing northeast to dissect the town. Approximately half a mile north of the historic downtown, the trail runs along nearby schools, businesses, parks and private residences. The community offers 122 acres of municipal parkland for community members and visitors to enjoy, along with fine art and family-oriented entertainment sponsored by East Central College, the Union Area Chamber of Commerce, the Union R-XI Public School District and other civic organizations.

- Development Challenges
- Trailhead development



Franklin County Courthouse, Union



UNION

Community Photos



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

BikeWalkKC bikewalkkc.org

BikeWalkKC is a member-supported 501©(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to redefine our streets as places to build a culture of active living. They work to make Greater Kansas City a safer and more accessible place to walk, bike, live, work and play.

Conservation Federation of Missouri confedmo.org

The Conservation Federation of Missouri is a private organization made up of Missourians working together to better our natural resources and representing Missouri’s citizen conservationists. Actively involved in state and national issues that relate to conservation, the Federation has long been a prominent and effective voice before Missouri’s general assembly, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the Missouri Department of Conservation. Much of the conservation legislation in Missouri today exists because of the federation’s strong advocacy work.

Department of Health and Senior Services health.mo.gov

In 1883, Missourians were threatened by epidemics of smallpox, typhoid and cholera, which caused concerned physicians to lobby Missouri Legislature for the establishment of the State

Board of Health that was responsible for promoting health and preventing disease. State government reorganized several times, and finally in 1974, placed the Division of Health in the Department of Social Services. At that time, the division’s environmental engineering and solid waste programs were transferred to the Department of Natural Resources and the Missouri Crippled Children’s Service became a part of the Division of Health. In 1985, a bill was signed, creating the Department of Health, which supervises and manages all public health functions and programs formerly administered by the Division of Health.

Friends of the Rock Island Trail rockislandtrail.org

Friends of Missouri Rock Island Trail, Inc. is a coalition of communities, businesses, organizations and citizens. FoMORIT seeks to work with agencies, groups and trail communities in the development of the Rock Island Trail. Their vision is to help in the development of a world-class park that preserves and enhances the landscape of Missouri; provides for a healthy environment and recreational opportunities; stimulates community pride and economic development; and protects natural, cultural and educational resources.

Local Motion lomocomo.org

Local Motion, founded in Columbia, Missouri in 2000, is a grassroots, membership-based transportation advocacy organization. Local Motion has a strong track record of successful policy and infrastructure campaigns for walking, biking and transit, achieving local advocacy wins for sidewalks, bike lanes, intersection improvements, bole boulevards and public transit. They have significantly influenced the development of Columbia’s trail network.

Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation mobikefed.org

MoBikeFed is a statewide group who work together for better bicycling, walking and trails in Missouri. They provide advocacy alerts and bicycle, pedestrian and trails news from around the state.

Missouri Chamber of Commerce mochamber.com

The Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry takes care of business for Missouri employers in the halls of the Capitol, in the courtroom and beyond. Empowered by a deep passion for their cause and a strong network of professionals, the Missouri Chamber brings together members to make Missouri a better place to live and work.

Missouri Municipal League mocities.com

Since 1934, the Missouri Municipal League’s aim has been to “develop an agency for the cooperation of Missouri cities, towns and villages and to promote the interest, welfare and closer relations among them in order to improve municipal government and administration in the state.” The League’s basic goal is to strengthen cities through unity and cooperation. This independent, statewide, not-for-profit association is governed by a board of directors consisting of a president, vice president, active past presidents, 12 elected municipal officials and five appointed municipal members from each congressional district.

Missouri Department of Transportation modot.org

MoDOT’s mission is to provide a world-class transportation system that is safe, innovative, reliable and dedicated to a prosperous Missouri. MoDOT prides itself on strong institutional values representing the fundamental principles and philosophy of the agency. They establish the boundaries that all department activities will be conducted and can be grouped into three primary pillars: safety, service and stability.

Missouri Outdoor Activity Coalition

Missouri Outdoor Activity Coalition promotes health and fitness through outdoor activity. MOAC coordinates local events to encourage members to get active in the community and volunteer to improve outdoor opportunities for generations to come.

Missouri Park and Recreation Association mopark.org

This nonprofit association works to provide opportunities for all Missourians to enjoy quality leisure activities and is dedicated to promoting public support for parks and recreation and public awareness of the contribution of recreation to a balanced life. The association works to improve the quality and accessibility of urban and rural parks, open spaces and recreational lands, facilities and programs. It promotes research and information dissemination on park, conservation, recreation and leisure issues.

Missouri Parks Association missouriparksassociation.org

The Missouri Parks Association is a nonprofit citizens organization – independent and non-partisan – dedicated to the protection, enhancement and interpretation of Missouri State Parks and Historic Sites. Founded in 1982, MPA has

been a steadfast supporter and tireless defender of the state park system.

Missouri State Parks Foundation missouristateparksfoundation.org

Since 2001, the Missouri State Parks Foundation has helped Missouri State Parks create top-notch experiences for residents and visitors alike. They support fundraising and enhancements to parks and sites throughout the state. Their mission is to help create and sustain an outstanding collection of scenic parks and recreation areas and to preserve and protect significant environmental areas, historical and cultural sites.

Missourians for Responsible Transportation movingmissouri.org

In 2018, four Missouri organizations established Missourians for Responsible Transportation (MRT). These organizations realized that although they’d been successful with advocacy work in their home cities and surrounding areas, by partnering together, they could help to better address Missouri’s transportation at a statewide level. They have more than 35 transportation officials with different specialties working together to make Missourians’ lives better.

National Parks Service - Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program nps.gov/orgs/rtca

The National Park Service – Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program (NPS-RTCA) supports locally-led conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the country. They assist communities and public land managers in developing or restoring parks, conservation areas, rivers and wildlife habitats, as well as creating outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors.

Ozark Greenways ozarkgreenways.org

Formed in 1991, Ozark Greenways is the driving force behind a 200+ mile planned system of multi-use trails, connecting streams, parks, businesses and neighborhoods. These trails connect people to the outdoors, each other and places they want to go, which follows their mission of building a trail system that connects and enhances our community.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy railstotrails.org

Since 1986, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has been committed to building a nation connected by trails. Their mission is to reimagine public

spaces to create safe ways for everyone to walk, bike and be active outdoors. Their focus is on linking corridors while creating trail networks that connect people and places, bringing transformative benefits to communities across the country.

Trailnet trailnet.org

For more than three decades, Trailnet has worked in the St. Louis region and across the state, advancing walking and biking in the St. Louis region. They lead in fostering healthy, active and vibrant communities where walking, bicycling and the use of public transit are a way of life. Trailnet is reimagining streets to create a connected, comprehensive and cohesive network of protected bikeways and high quality sidewalks, making it safe and easy to bike and walk. These connections will create a seamless route from the front porch of the Gateway Arch to the backyard of the Katy Trail.

University of Missouri Extension extension.missouri.edu

Through the innovations and ideals of the University of Missouri, MU Extension improves lives, businesses and communities by focusing on solving Missouri’s grand challenges around economic opportunity, educational access and health and well-being.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is the park open to the public?

The developed section of Rock Island Trail State Park, extending from Pleasant Hill to Windsor is open to the public. Undeveloped sections of the trail are not open for public use, and trespassers will be prosecuted in accordance with Chapter 569, RSMo; Section 253.035; RSMo and 10 CSR 90-2.040(6).



Katy Trail State Park crossing Rock Island Trail State Park at Windsor.



Adjacent land near Henley

What if someone comes onto my property?

Missouri State Parks takes the concerns of adjacent landowners seriously, especially with respect to the potential for intrusion onto private property. As has been the practice on the Katy Trail, it is the intent of Missouri State Parks to work cooperatively with adjacent landowners along the corridor. Missouri statutes provide protections to landowners adjacent to recreational trails. In addition to statutory protections, Missouri State Parks has worked cooperatively with landowners adjacent to Katy Trail State Park to help minimize the likelihood of trespass from the trail onto adjoining property. This was accomplished primarily by marking the boundaries of state park property with signs placed at regular intervals, which also warn trail users not to trespass. This message is also provided via signage and brochures at all trailhead information depots. Missouri State Parks will develop similar measures for Rock Island Trail State Park as well.

Why did Missouri State Parks take so much time to make a decision regarding the rail corridor?

The conversion of the corridor into a trail stands to be a significant project, and it was essential for Missouri State Parks to gain a further understanding of the costs, liabilities and benefits of this potential project. Additionally, as has been the experience with the Katy Trail, the development and ongoing operation and maintenance of a trail is a large responsibility that requires significant financial resources.

How much will it cost to build the 144 miles of undeveloped trail?

An estimated total of \$100 million will ultimately be needed to fully develop the trail. The project's funding will likely require a combination of private, public and corporate sources. Interested donors should contact the Missouri State Parks Foundation to learn more about partnering in this effort.

Where will the money come from to build the trail?

The project's funding will likely require a combination of private, public and corporate sources.

I'm interested in making a donation. How do I get started?

You can assist with the development of Rock Island Trail State Park by making a donation to the Missouri State Parks Foundation.



To donate, scan or click the QR code to visit the Missouri State Parks Foundation donations page

Could Missouri State Parks build the trail in sections over the years, similar to the Katy Trail?

Yes. It will not be possible to develop the trail all at once. Development of the trail will occur in sections over several years, as each section of the corridor has different features and challenges.

The development of Katy Trail State Park would not have been possible without the generosity of Ted and Pat Jones, and partnerships like this will be important for the future of Rock Island Trail State Park. As with the development of the Katy Trail, development of the Rock Island Trail will require additional partnerships and commitments.



Approach to the Osage River bridge



Completed fencing project in Miller county

How will Missouri State Parks address fencing needs for private property along the trail?

It is the intent of Missouri State Parks to work cooperatively with landowners adjacent to Rock Island Trail State Park. State law requires Missouri State Parks to maintain any fencing along the undeveloped 144-mile corridor. Missouri State Parks has been working with adjacent landowners along the corridor who have expressed interest in fencing the boundary between their property and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources right-of-way. If you are an adjacent landowner and would like to discuss fencing options, please call or text 573-489-8780 or send an email to moparks@dnr.mo.gov.



Gate crossing system

I farm on both sides of the tracks. How do I get my livestock and farm equipment across the trail?

Missouri State Parks has entered into agreements with adjacent landowners to accommodate these types of requests and are currently working with landowners along the undeveloped 144-mile corridor. A gate crossing system has been developed to close off the trail to allow the movement of cattle from one side of the trail to the other.

Will private crossings still exist?

Yes. Missouri State Parks will honor any preexisting real estate agreements between landowners and Missouri Central Railroad. Missouri State Parks will work with landowners to develop new agreements to allow crossings, access and occupations of the corridor where needed upon request.

Once the park is developed, will motorized vehicles be allowed on the trail?

All motorized equipment is prohibited except official and emergency vehicles. Electrically assisted pedal-powered bicycles and tricycles will be allowed at a maximum speed of 20 mph on developed sections of the trail. In addition, electrically powered mobility devices, such as Segways and electric golf carts, will be allowed for people with disabilities. Gas-powered vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles and off-road vehicles, are prohibited.



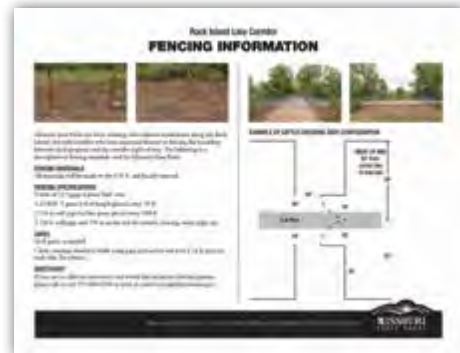
FOR MORE INFORMATION

To download the full-sized informational handouts on any topic of interest, scan or click on the QR code shown above the category.

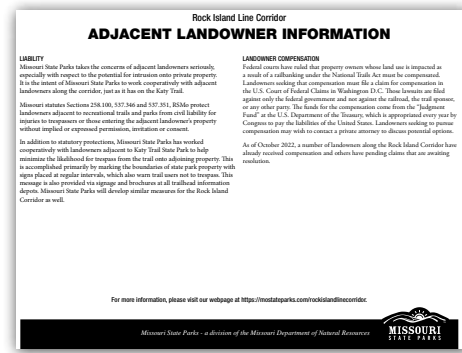
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USE & LICENSE FORMS



DESIGN PLANS



MSP WEBSITE

For more information on Rock Island Trail State Park, visit mostateparks.com or scan the QR Code above. The most up-to-date information can be found on the website.



LAW ENFORCEMENT

Missouri State Park Rangers patrol the undeveloped section of Rock Island Trail State Park. If you have an emergency along the undeveloped section of Rock Island Trail State Park, please call 911 or *55 and Hwy Patrol will dispatch to the Missouri State Park Rangers. For non-emergency issues please call 573-489-8780 and a state parks team member will contact a ranger to respond to your issue.



For more information about the Missouri State Park Rangers, visit mostateparks.com or scan the QR Code above.

ROCK ISLAND TRAIL STATE PARK
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Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this document. This master plan is constantly being updated and new versions will be posted at mostateparks.com as information changes. The most up-to-date version of this and other documents mentioned in this master plan can be found on the website.

ROCK ISLAND TRAIL STATE PARK
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East side approach to Gasconade River bridge. Circa 1902.



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